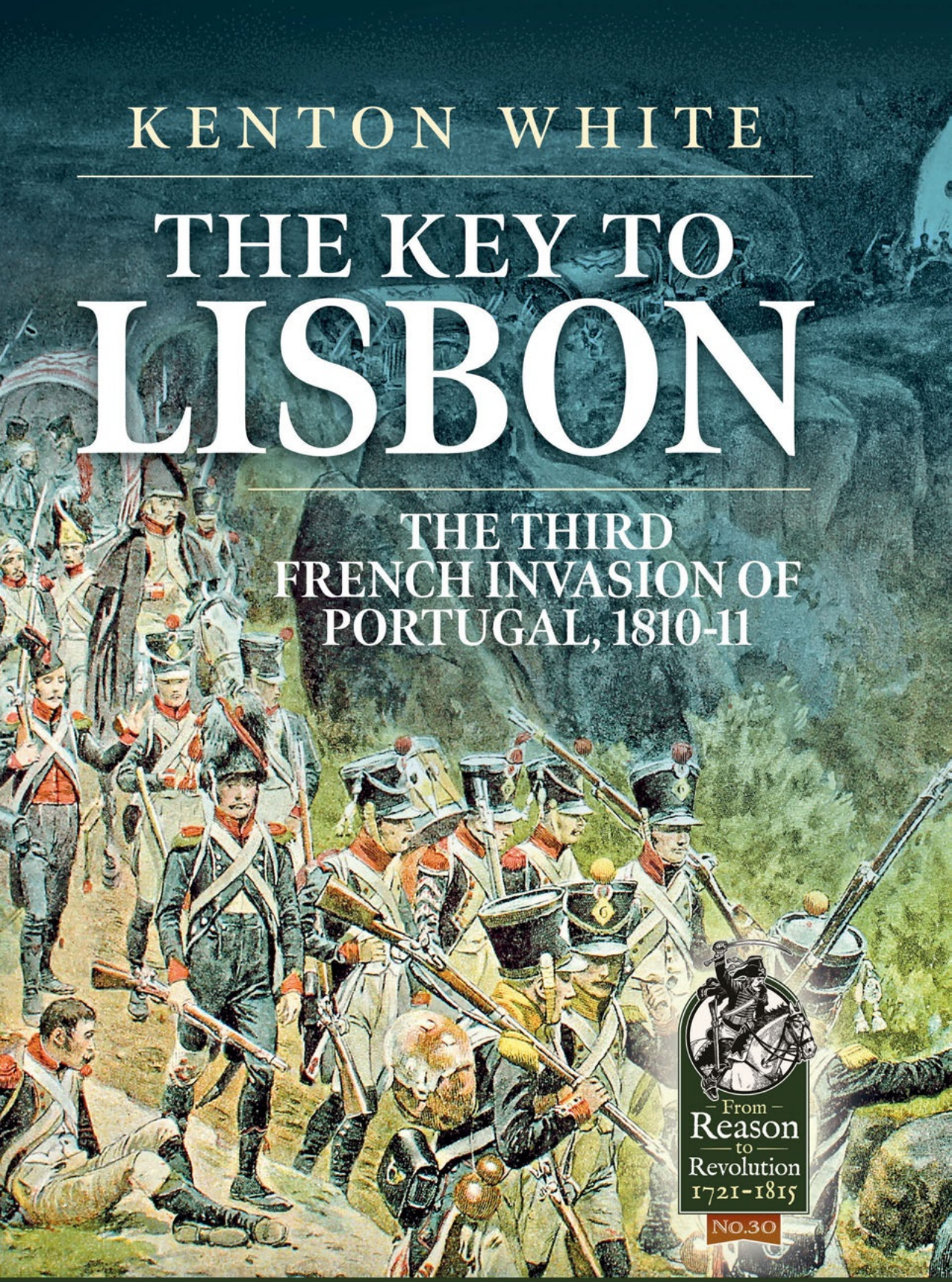
KENTON WHITE

THE KEY TO LISBON

THE THIRD FRENCH INVASION OF PORTUGAL, 1810-11



From Reason to Revolution 1721-1815

No.30

This study details the preparation, planning and execution of the invasion of Portugal in 1810 by the French *Armée de Portugal* under Marshal Massena and the defensive measures taken by the British and their Portuguese and Spanish allies. It also covers the practice of all armies involved during this campaign, working from original sources. These sources provide a different interpretation of some key aspects of the campaign to those which are generally accepted. The work focusses on the strategic, operational, and tactical planning undertaken by both sides in preparation for the invasion, and the actual progress of the campaign. A narrative of the battles and sieges, with analysis at the tactical-level, also brings out the differences in planning and intelligence gathering.

This particular campaign is important as it has attracted little attention from historians and was crucial as a turning point in the Peninsular War. This was the last time that Portugal was invaded by the French during the Peninsular War, and the allies' handling of the campaign contrasted sharply with that of the French. Its success also gave Wellington political security against the 'croakers' back in England. The research demonstrates the difficulties both armies had in prosecuting their plans during the campaign and highlights the stark differences in the approach taken by each commander.

Kenton White is a lecturer in Strategic Studies and International Relations at the University of Reading. He has had a life-long interest in the Peninsular War and the armies involved.

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The Third French Invasion of Portugal, 1810–11

Kenton White

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To Charles Raeuber

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Preface

I became interested in the Battle of Buçaco when I was in my teens. As a youthful wargamer I laboriously created the armies for the battle, and refought it on many occasions. This led me to pursue research into the campaign, as there was little information about it compared to others such as Salamanca or Waterloo. I was lucky enough to meet Charles Raeuber in the 1980s and collaborated with him on research into the use of maps during the campaign. Since then I have continued my interest and research, which I have brought together in this book.

Many of the modern works on the Peninsular War rely on the works of Napier, Oman, and Fortescue for their information.[1] The campaign of 1810 has been covered in only a few works recently, and these, to a great extent, rely on the above mentioned works and that of Chambers.[2] A book published in Portugal in 2010 to commemorate the 200th anniversary relied predominantly on English-language works, and heavily on Oman and Napier.[3] Where information is available both in the archives and published sources, I have attempted to cite both, so that you may avail yourself of the same material. I have tried to avoid the 'sin' of nationalism, crediting the different armies with their respective achievements. From my research, I certainly do not agree with George Napier's view, '… that upon the British soldiers [Wellington] depended for the successful issue of the fight …'[4] Wellington depended on the British, German, and Portuguese soldiers of his army. Regarding the Portuguese troops, Napier's view is as incorrect in its bias as that of Napoleon.

In my research I have sought to return to original sources, and to present the events based on them, supported by archival sources. This does lead to some conclusions which are at odds with the accepted course of events. I have attempted to let those taking part speak for themselves, and to use information from the participants in the campaign, rather than interpretations of that information. I have tried, where possible, to work back to the original sources, and in doing so have found that some of the stories relating to the campaign have been either misunderstood or totally fabricated.

1 Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War* (London: Greenhill Books, 2004), Vol.III; Major General Sir William Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France, from the Year 1807 to the Year 1814* (London: Thomas and William Boone, 1840) Vol.VI; John Fortescue, *A History of The British Army*, 20 vols (London: Macmillan, 1910).

2 Lt. Col. G. L. Chambers, *Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co Ltd, 1910).

3 Gabriel Espírito Santo, *O combate do Côa, 24 de julho de 1810: a Divisão de infantaria ligeira no início da invasão de Massena* (Parede: Tribuna da História, 2010).

4 George Napier (ed. William Napier), *Passages in the Early Military Life of General Sir George T. Napier, K.C.B.* (London: John Murray, 1884), pp.140–41.

Today, it is very difficult to get a feel for the ground at Buçaco, as the ridge and surrounding area is covered entirely by trees. However, we are lucky that Lieutenant Colonel G. L. Chambers took many photographs of the battlefield for his book Wellington's *Battlefields Illustrated: Bussaco* [sic], published on the centenary of the battle. These photographs show the ridge clear of any tree growth, as it must have looked in September 1810, and illustrate well the uneven ground over which the armies had to manoeuvre. Of interest are the photographs of the 'false pass' near San Antonio do Cantaro, and the roads near Sula. I strongly recommend viewing an original edition of this book, as the modern facsimiles do not do justice to the photographs. With regard to the defensive lines near Lisbon, some of the earthworks were reconstructed for the bicentenary, and are worth visiting. The defences at Monte Agraço demonstrate how imposing they would have looked, and how difficult they would have been to attack. There are several visitor centres dotted around the Lines, with extremely helpful and enthusiastic staff.

Throughout the book army units are referred to by their regimental number where appropriate, and these ordinal numbers also indicate the nationality: British and King's German Legion units, for example, are shown as Xth (or Xst or Xnd, where X is the unit number); Portuguese units, for example, X°; French, for example, Xe. This way, throughout the text, it is possible to discern the nationality of the unit under discussion by its number. The numbers of troops in each unit, where mentioned, are taken from the works of Fririon and Koch, and any deviation will be noted in the text. Fririon is likely to be reliable, as he was the chief of staff to Massena and would have had access to all of the relevant material during the campaign itself, although his history was not published until after his death.[5]

This book is about the preparation, planning and execution of the invasion of Portugal in 1810 by the French *Armée de Portugal* under Marshal Massena, and the response by the British, Portuguese, and Spanish allies. It also covers the practice of all armies involved during this campaign, working from original sources. The work focusses on the strategic, operational, and tactical planning undertaken by both sides in preparation for the invasion, and the actual progress of the campaign. A narrative of the battles and sieges, with a more focussed analysis at the tactical-level (such as the question of line versus column) will also bring out the necessity of adequate planning and intelligence.

The 1810 campaign was a turning point in the Peninsular War, but has attracted few authors to investigate it fully, many focussing on particular aspects of the campaign such as the sieges, the Battle of Buçaco, or the Lines of Torres Vedras.[6] The campaign is significant for one prominent reason, that this was the last time that Portugal was invaded by the French during the Peninsular War. It is also marked by the differing ways in which the two forces were prepared for, and handled during, the campaign. The strategies of both sides showed marked contrasts which directly affected the outcome of the campaign.

5 François Nicolas Fririon, *Journal Historique de La Campagne de Portugal, Entreprise Par Les Français, Sous Les Ordres Du Maréchal Masséna, Prince d'Essling, (Du 15. Sept. 1810 Au 12. Mai 1811)* (Paris: Leneuve, 1841).

6 Charles-Alphonse Raeuber, *Les Renseignements, La Reconnaissance et Les Transmissions Militaires Du Temps de Napoleon: L' Exemple de La Troisième Invasion Du Portugal: 1810* (Lisbon: Commissão Portuguesa de História Militar, 1993); Chambers, *Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco*; Donald D. Horward, *The Battle of Bussaco* (Talahassee: The Florida State University, 1965); Basil P. Hughes, *Firepower: Weapons Effectiveness on the Battlefield, 1630–1850* (Staplehurst, Kent: Spellmount, 1997); A. H. Norris and R. W. Bremner, *The Lines of Torres Vedras* (Lisbon: The British Historical Society of Portugal, 1986); John Grehan, *The Lines Of Torres Vedras: The Cornerstone Of Wellington's Strategy in the Peninsular War 1809-12* (Spellmount, 2004).

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the staff at the various archives and museums I have visited or contacted in the course of writing this book. They have dealt with my enquiries with patience and forbearance.

My family has been a constant source of support and inspiration for this endeavour, and I would like to thank each one. For my children, who have always responded positively to another of Dad's 'projects'; To my wife, who now knows more about this campaign than she ever realised she wanted to. Thank you.

Kenton White
January 2019

Introduction

During October 1810 Wellington made regular visits to the fort number 14, known as *Alqueidão* or 'The Great Fort', at Monte Agraço south of the small town of Sobral, to the North of Lisbon. From here he could see what the French were up to. The enemy had pursued his army from the frontier at Almeida back through Coimbra to this outpost on the defences around the capital city. But they would go no further; this was the deepest penetration of the French Empire into Portugal in 1810, and it would never reach so far again. Sir Arthur Wellesley, Viscount Wellington, had taken two years to fully develop his 'cautious' system which played out during 1810 and early 1811. During the previous two-and-a-half years he had beaten the French at Vimiero and Oporto, and gained bitter experience from fighting with the Spanish in the Talavera campaign.

In July 1807 Napoleon had instructed Talleyrand to, '… inform the Portuguese ambassador that by the first of September the ports of Portugal must be closed to England; failing which, I will declare war on Portugal…'[1] Spain and France would withdraw their ambassadors from Lisbon and declare a united war against Portugal. The first invasion in 1807 had left the French in control of Portugal and, more importantly, occupying Lisbon. The Portuguese Royal family and government fled to Brazil aboard British ships, and the country had been brought into the Continental System. Resistance in Portugal was to rise to a similar level of brutality as in Spain, and there was an active opposition to the occupation of the country which encouraged the British to land forces there in 1808. There had been a number of troops assembled in Cork, Ireland, for an invasion of Venezuela, and these were redirected to Portugal to take advantage of the disorder there once news of the Portuguese insurrection against the French had reached Britain. The force collected in Cork was under Lieutenant General Arthur Wellesley, who would have command in Portugal. However, reports began to be received which indicated the French in Portugal to be stronger than originally anticipated, so additional forces were to be sent. This meant a more senior commander was appointed in the form of Sir Hew Dalrymple. Dalrymple had never commanded an army in the field, and his role was to end with the controversial Convention of Cintra. The first troops were landed at Mondego Bay on 1 August 1808, and once assembled the army advanced southwards to Lisbon. Wellesley met and pushed back the French at Roliça, and then defeated them in battle at Vimiero on 21 August, but was then superseded

1 Henri Plon and J. Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.15 (Paris, 1864), p.541, 12928, A M. de Talleyrand, Dresde, 19 July 1807.

in command by the arrival of Dalrymple and his second-in-command, Sir Harry Burrard.[2] The Convention of Cintra followed, by which the occupying French army was returned to France, in British ships, along with their plunder and spoils of war.[3] There was an enquiry into the Convention, and Burrard, Dalrymple, and Wellesley were called in front of the court to answer for their actions.[4] Wellesley was caught up in the enquiry, but was exonerated of any wrong-doing. Meanwhile Lieutenant General Sir John Moore was appointed the commander of the army. Napoleon had then come to Spain in 1808 to chase the remaining British out. The British army in the Peninsula, after an advance into Spain, was beaten back by the French, and evacuated from La Coruña by the Royal Navy in January 1809. Napoleon did not wait for the denouement at La Coruña, allowing Marshal Soult the final prize of seeing the British embark. Sir John Moore was killed during the evacuation.

Following the expulsion of the British from Spain, Soult invaded the north of Portugal in March 1809 and occupied Oporto. Marshal Victor was positioned near the Spanish border, with *Général de Division* Sebastiani to his east, threatening the southern invasion route, and Marshal Ney occupied Galicia. With the return of the British to Portugal in 1809, the French were faced with the war against them and the guerrillas in Spain, the occasional Spanish field army concentrating to threaten them, and a resurgent Portuguese army under the British Lieutenant General Sir William Beresford who was made Marshal of Portugal. This should have been the time for Napoleon to return to Spain to finish the job, or delegate a single commander to do it for him. Instead, the marshals and generals in Spain were concerned only with their part of the Peninsula, ignoring requests from other commanders, and sometimes even Napoleon himself, to cooperate. Soult was the worst offender for this, and his part in the third French invasion cannot be underestimated.

Sir Arthur Wellesley was appointed commander of the army in Portugal on 2 April 1809, with the previous commander Sir John Cradock moved to command the forces in Gibraltar. The army under Wellesley's command numbered 23,455 (not including artillery or engineers) either in Portugal or assigned for duty there. Viscount Castlereagh, then Minister for War, wrote to Wellesley that 'The defence of Portugal you will consider as the first and immediate object of your attention. But … His Majesty … leaves it to your judgement … how your efforts can best be combined with the Spanish as well as the Portuguese troops in support of the common cause.'[5] He was instructed to render the Portuguese army capable of co-operating with the British.

The objectives for Wellesley were clearly identified. He was to defend Portugal with the combined British and Portuguese armies, and to cooperate with the Spanish where possible. These two factors dictated the strategy that Sir Arthur was to adopt for the forthcoming campaign. Fulfilling the promise made by the British Government to protect Portugal,

2 John Gurwood (ed.), *The Dispatches of the Field Marshal The Duke of Wellington. An Enlarged Edition in Eight Volumes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.95, Wellesley to the Duke of Richmond, Camp at Vimiero, 22 August 1808.

3 Gurwood, (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.104–6, Definitive Convention for the evacuation of Portugal by the French Army, 30 August 1808.

4 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.135–78, Court of Inquiry, 14 November to 27 December 1808.

5 The 2nd Duke of Wellington, (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda Of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington, K.G.* (London: John Murray, 1860), Vol.6, pp.210–11, Viscount Castlereagh to Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Wellesley, Downing Street, 2 April 1809.

Wellesley was given command of the forces in the country, despite there being much opposition in Britain to continuing the war in the Peninsula. Those forces were largely inexperienced on campaign, and the staff unfamiliar with the problems of war and movement in the Peninsula. Reaching Lisbon on 22 April 1809, Wellington was quick to reorganise where it was necessary, and to put in place the essential services of intelligence gathering and logistical control.[6]

Wellesley's immediate plans were to strike at Oporto to attack Soult's French army occupying the north of the country.[7] He would then move to attack Victor's army in cooperation with the Spanish General Cuesta. He left troops under Beresford to watch Marshal Victor's forces and moved the main strength of the army to Coimbra, arriving there on 2 May. In a series of outflanking manoeuvres and surprise attacks, Wellesley pushed Soult's troops out of Oporto on 12 May, and forced him to abandon Portugal, along with most of his artillery and baggage.

In a letter from Castlereagh, Wellesley was instructed that cooperation with the Spanish may be exercised for the defence of Portugal, but Government authority was to be sought should the campaign move into Spain proper. The Spanish government had declined to allow the advanced guard of the British army to land at Cadiz, and the clear instructions read, '… His Majesty does not feel that he can in justice to the safety of his own troops again employ an auxiliary army in Spain till the Spanish government and nation shall cease to entertain those feelings of jealousy which are equally inconsistent with their own interest and the effectual prosecution of the war.'[8] Wellington replied that he was preparing to move northwards to force Soult from Oporto with his army and 6,000 Portuguese troops, and he would then, '… return to the Eastern frontier of the Kingdom, and … cooperate with the Spanish General, Cuesta, against the army of Marshal Victor.'[9] The instructions regarding the Spanish were a perceptive indication of the level of cooperation Wellesley's would get from them during the Talavera campaign. There was an overall failure of logistical supply during this campaign. The Spanish had promised to supply the British army whilst in Spain, but these promises proved to be without foundation.

Wellesley then headed back southward to face Victor's forces in cooperation with the Spanish. The campaign did not start well, as Victor was able to escape from dangerous situation after Cuesta's army had failed to move into position on 23 July. Victor was able to join up with Sebastiani's forces, as well as those of King Joseph; the French army now exceeded 37,000 troops. The French now advanced westwards, and moved in to position to attack the Allied army. Wellesley's and Cuesta's armies fought together at Talavera de la Reina, stopping the French attacks. With his lines of communication back to Portugal threatened, Wellesley retreated back to the frontier. After the victory at Talavera, Wellesley was named Viscount Wellington, and will be referred to as such from now on.

The British army retreated from Talavera without food for days on end. Wellington quickly developed a low opinion of the Spanish armies and their commanders. After

6 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.186–87, Wellesley to Marshal Beresford, Lisbon, 23 April 1809.
7 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.187–89, Wellesley to Frere, Lisbon, 24 April 1809.
8 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.) *Supplementary Dispatches*, 1860, Vol.6, p.212, Castlereagh to Wellesley, Downing Street, 3 April 1809.
9 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.191, Wellesley to Castlereagh, Lisbon, 27 April, 1809.

Talavera, he concluded that the British Army should not again co-operate with the Spanish until they had been reorganised. He described how, '… whole corps threw away their arms, and ran off in my presence, when they were neither attacked nor threatened with attack …'[10] Wellington wrote, '… The Spanish cavalry are, I believe, nearly entirely without discipline … the infantry [is] lamentable … and unequal to a contest with the French …'.[11] Dependence on supplies showed the vulnerability of poorly supplied armies in Spain and Portugal and Wellington resolved not to rely on others for his supplies, and arranged with Sir George Murray, his Quartermaster General, for the regular supply of food and equipment through Lisbon.[12] He wrote to Beresford that he would remain on the defensive in Portugal rather than risk cooperation with the Spanish again.[13] Perhaps this experience is what helped persuade Wellington, when the time came, not to risk his army in the defence of Ciudad Rodrigo during the campaign of 1810. Apart from the deficiency of cavalry compared to the French, advancing into Spain in the face of superior enemy numbers, with the recent events after Talavera still fresh in the memory of the British, the risk was simply too great to contemplate.

Wellington was aware that if Napoleon was successful against Austria, the French would send large numbers of reinforcements to Spain.[14] Nevertheless, this would take time to arrange, and would give Wellington the opportunity to prepare.[15] Meanwhile, Napoleon tinkered with the government control of parts of Spain, even through 1810, setting up new district authorities. The changes in government and the independence of certain areas from overall Imperial control led to confusion and disagreement. For example, Napoleon ordered, 'The province of Burgos is to form a separate government, under the name of the Fifth Government of Spain. The provinces of Valladolid, Palencia, and Toro, are to form a separate government, under the name of the Sixth Government.'[16] The new governments confused the overall military control in Spain at a time when it needed clear direction, and a single command. Wellington knew that at some point the French would be able to gather sufficient forces to invade Portugal. The questions to be answered were when the invasion would take place and where would it fall?

War, as Clausewitz described it, is, '… not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means'.[17] He wrote, '… tactics teaches the use of armed forces in the engagement; strategy, the use of engagements for the objects of the war'.[18] Strategy is the overriding objective of the military arm: in this case, for the British, it meant the defence of Portugal with the aim of eventually

10 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.447, Wellington to Marquis Wellesley, Merida, 24 August 1810.
11 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.450, Wellington to Castlereagh, Merida, 25 August 1810.
12 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.552, See for example, Wellington to Murray, Quartermaster General, Lisbon, 16 October 1809.
13 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.457, Wellington to Marshal Beresford, Merida, 30 August 1809.
14 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.453, Wellington to Viscount Castlereagh, Merida, 25 August 1809.
15 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.601, Wellington to the Right Honourable J. Villiers, Badajoz, 20 November 1809.
16 Anon (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte with His Brother Joseph, Sometime King of Spain. Selected and Translated, with Explanatory Notes, from the 'Memoires Du Roi Joseph.'* (New York: D Appleton and Company, 1856), Vol.2, pp.127, 624. Decree of Napoleon, Havre, 29 May 1810.
17 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (London: David Campbell, 1993), p.99.
18 Clausewitz, *On War*, p.146.

expelling the French from the Peninsula, and the grand strategic goal of ultimately defeating Napoleon. For the French it meant the imposition of the Continental System, implying the defeat of the British army in Portugal which might bring about a change of Government in London. Strategy, and its operational and tactical components, can also be described under the headings of 'ends', 'ways', and 'means'.[19] In this work the 'ends' are described by the political objectives set by the respective Governments. The 'ways' are how the ends were to be achieved, and might not necessarily be military. The respective strategies are encapsulated in papers described in the text between the Government and Wellington for the Allies, and between Napoleon and Massena for the French. These are demonstrated in the commanders' letters to their generals and back to their respective governments. The 'means' includes the employment of military force to achieve the strategic objectives, and all the ancillary requirements that takes. This includes the detailed planning for the campaign, battlefield tactics, and employment of topography and intelligence to aid decision making. Finally, 'assumptions' are those views which are held to make the planning and strategy valid, such as the assumption by Wellington of the method of invasion by the French, or of Napoleon's notion that the Portuguese army did not count when measuring the opposing forces. The assumptions of the respective commanders were to have an extremely important effect on the coming campaign. In his *Art of War* Jomini wrote:

> The art of war, as generally considered, consists of five purely military branches, – viz: Strategy, Grand Tactics, Logistics, Engineering, and Tactics. A sixth essential branch, hitherto unrecognized, might be termed Diplomacy in its relation to War. Although this branch is more naturally and intimately connected with the profession of a statesman than with that of a soldier, it cannot be denied that, if it be useless to a subordinate general, it is indispensable to every general commanding an army…[20]

Jomini's inclusion of diplomacy applies directly to the campaign of 1810. Wellington was intimately involved in decision making in Portugal, along with the Regency Council, raising taxes and issuing orders to the populace. Massena, on the other hand, was relatively passive as far as diplomacy went. He received his instructions from Paris which allowed him little leeway in his dealings locally. A Napoleonic puppet was on the throne in Spain, and presumably Napoleon, once the conquest of Portugal was completed, would appoint another puppet to rule in Lisbon.

Using slightly different terminology from Jomini, but expressing in a similar way the problems of command, Professor Colin S. Gray wrote that a general must,

> … pursue his operational plan flexibly and adaptively in the face of the enemy (who must be assumed to be adaptive and competent); meet contingencies of all kinds both calmly yet often, of necessity, creatively; and last but not least, never forget

19 Colin S. Gray, *The Future of Strategy* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2015), p.109.
20 Antoine Henri Jomini, *The Art of War* (London: Greenhill Books, 2006), p.2.

> that the warfare he is waging is only about the political ends that should be the reward for military advantage.[21]

With the descriptions of Jomini, Clausewitz, and Gray in mind, the 1810 campaign will be examined. It is important to understand the functional levels of command, and also how they fit together. Wellington developed a strategy for the Peninsular War in conjunction with the broader, wider policy of the government of Great Britain. Wellington's part was to defend Portugal from the French using the British army and that of the Portuguese. Wellington produced a plan to fulfil the strategy utilising all the resources available to him. Conversely, Massena had no influence at all over the overall French strategy, which was clearly defined by Napoleon. However, more problematically, Napoleon also dictated Massena's operational plans to a great extent, and even instructed Massena on the organisation of his tactical formations.[22] Napoleon saw the third invasion in straightforward terms to close the ports of Portugal to the British and seal the continent economically. He appointed his most capable subordinate to command the invasion, and promised anything he desired to secure the objective – the capture of Lisbon and occupation of Portugal.

Military advantage is the goal of the commanding generals, as Gray has identified. Massena appeared, on paper at least, to have the advantage in numbers and experienced troops, but he would have to invade Portugal with an unfriendly population mobilised against him, and no secure lines of communication. Wellington, in contrast, had the benefit of a mostly friendly population, and command of the seas. He developed, over a period of two years from his first landing in Portugal, a plan which he believed could defeat what he saw as an inevitable French invasion. His plan involved building defences, mobilising the population, and a 'scorched earth' policy, as well as fielding conventional armies against the enemy. He made provision for several different routes which the French might take in their invasion of the country, countering each one in turn in the manner best suited to the circumstances. Using his engineers, his knowledge of the country, and most of all an instinctive feel for what the French would do, his plan ultimately rested on being able to maintain his army in the field, or remove it from the Peninsula. This plan would provide him with the foundation for subsequent campaigns into Spain, and finally on into France in 1813-1814.

Logistics, as defined by Jomini, is the practical art of moving armies. Within this broad description he includes such things as the:

> preparation of all the material necessary for setting the army in motion … Providing for the successive arrival of convoys of supplies. Collecting all the means of transportation of the country and of the army, and regulating their use … looking out also for preserving suitable means of communication of the army with its base.[23]

21 Colin S. Gray, *Defense Planning for National Security: Navigation Aids for the Mystery Tour*, Advancing Strategic Thought Series (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2014), pp.30–31.

22 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, pp.385–87, 16519, Napoleon au Berthier, Le Havre, 29 May 1810.

23 Jomini, *The Art of War*, pp.252–55.

To logistics I hope it is not too problematic to include intelligence operations and its associated function, map-making. The movement of armies at the time relied on the soldiers' feet, and on the hooves of the horses, mules, and oxen. In some cases, parts of the armies could only move a few miles a day because of poor roads, and in many cases damaged wheels as the poor road surfaces took their toll. It is important to remember, however, that the wagons and carts were transporting supplies for the army, and if that supply line broke, the soldiers were left without food and ammunition, and if forced to forage for food discipline and organisation could break down. The iron law of logistical supply was to affect the French particularly, but the allies were to suffer from it too.

The commissariat of both armies were responsible for feeding and supplying their forces. They had a difficult job in Portugal, where food was scarce. The allies relied on secure lines of communication to transport the required food regularly to the troops, but even this system broke down at various times, despite detailed planning. The British could rely on their command of the seas to land supplies in friendly territory, and to remove wounded and sick soldiers, as the Royal Navy did at Figueira. The French quickly resorted to foraging from the local areas they passed through, as their supply lines back to Spain were cut by the Portuguese guerrillas.

Military engineering is a mixture of construction and destruction. There were different roles undertaken by the engineers on both sides during this campaign, and these roles were not unique to Portugal. There were large scale works, such as the defences around Lisbon, which took many months, if not years, to complete. Then there were siege works which took weeks, and then the destruction or construction of individual defensive works, bridges and roads, which could take hours or a few days. Supporting these activities was the need to manufacture fascines and gabions, boats and bridge sections, and rope by the furlong. Thousands of people in Portugal were involved in these manufacturing roles, as were those in Britain and France, and always there was a shortage of the necessary tools to complete any work.

The engineers' knowledge extended from constructing defensive works through to the creation of maps and plans, and almost everything related to building or destroying structures in between. Jones' third volume of his work is even subtitled, 'Blowing up bridges on the lines of Torres Vedras and other places in Spain and Portugal'.[24] The French and Allied armies had engineers permanently attached to their armies, and employed them in much the same manner as each other. Most officers of engineers were educated men, capable and intelligent. They often worked with labourers, frequently seconded from the infantry regiments or the local population, to complete their tasks, as the number of skilled artificers and miners with each army was limited. In both armies, soldiers from the infantry and cavalry would be borrowed by the engineers if they had specialist knowledge such as miners, rope makers and carpenters.

The basic tools of the engineer are the same today: spades, pickaxes, and saws as well as explosives. Tools were in short supply for both sides, and were valuable commodities to be protected at all costs. Equally, during sieges, protection for the labourers and gunners

24 John T. Jones and Harry Jones, *Journals of Sieges Carried on by the Army Under the Duke of Wellington, in Spain, During the Years 1811 to 1814: With Notes and Additions ;Additions; Also Memoranda Relative to the Lines Thrown up to Cover Lisbon in 1810* (London: John Weale, 1846), Vol.3.

were important, and a target for the defenders to destroy. Gabions would be used to protect workers and artillery positions during a siege. Made from wicker, they were essentially tubes filled with earth, some two or three feet in diameter, which could absorb or deflect a cannon- or musket-ball. They were used in their thousands during the sieges. The defenders would aim to destroy earthworks and gabions, as well as capture tools, during sallies from the fortresses. The attackers would then be left with the task of remaking their defences, and finding replacement tools, slowing down the progress of the works, and hopefully allowing friendly forces to raise the siege.

In the same way that sieges followed a certain pattern, there were certain limitations that forced the armies to fight battles in a particular way. To understand why a Napoleonic battle was fought in the way it was, it is necessary to understand the capabilities of the weapons used, and therefore the tactics that they demand from the armies. The majority of infantry of both armies were equipped with the smoothbore musket. Inaccurate even at close range, this weapon needed to be use *en-masse* to obtain significant results. Hence, the infantry stood shoulder-to-shoulder and fired in volleys. In order to maximise the number of muskets able to fire, both sides used infantry in lines. The common routine to a firefight would involve units from both armies, standing in line some tens of metres away from each other, firing into the enemy ranks until one side broke and fled. The British, however, adapted this and would normally fire one or two volleys, then charge with the bayonet. Fifteen or sixteen inches long, this was a fearsome weapon that could penetrate all the way through a soldier's body.

There was one difference to the two armies: the British and Portuguese fought in a two deep line, and the French in three deep. Although this does not sound significant, it is generally held that the third rank in a French line would be unable to fire for fear of hitting men in the two front ranks. It did, however, provide for replacement of casualties in the front two ranks, whereas in a two deep line the soldiers would continually have to dress to the centre to fill in gaps. The third rank thus reduced the number of muskets able to fire by one third. It also shortened the line, so a British line would be longer than a French line of the same number of men. This provided an advantage for the British line, that it could 'wrap' around the ends of the French unit, effectively surrounding it on three sides.

Battalions were split into a number of companies: ten in British battalions, five in Portuguese and six in French. In British and French battalions, one company would be designated as Grenadiers, and another as Light Infantry. Portuguese battalions had one company of grenadiers, but no light troops, instead relying on their *caçadore* battalions to provide these. Battalions were grouped into regiments. In the French and Portuguese armies, battalions fought together as regiments as a matter of course. In the British army, battalions from the same regiment might be in the same division or brigade, but would be fought as individual units, rather than combined.

The French infantry battalions were composed of four companies of regular line infantry, one of grenadiers chosen for their stature, and one of *voltigeurs* to act as light troops and skirmishers. Each company would form in three ranks, so a company of 120 would have a frontage of 40 men. The infantry would typically move in column, and attempt to deploy into line at the last moment, in order to move quickly into action and then fire volleys from line at the enemy. There was, and still is, a belief, mistakenly held by some historians, that

the French would always attack in column to punch a hole through the enemy line. This was a misunderstanding of their tactics of manoeuvre, and ignores the accounts of the attempts by French columns to deploy into line. The misunderstanding originates from Oman's work, but even he revised his view on the tactics when he was presented with new information about the Battle of Maida.[25] However, Oman's work has been so influential that the idea of 'attack columns' in the Peninsula still holds sway.[26] In his account of the attack of the 31e Légère at Buçaco, Lemonnier-Delafosse indicates that his battalion attempted to deploy into line after advancing in column.[27] Deploying into line maximised the number of muskets available to fire, and did the same for the number of bayonets available for a charge at the enemy. Often the French manoeuvre columns were caught before they could deploy into line because of Wellington's tactic of hiding his main battle line behind a ridge crest or other natural obstacle. This meant the commander of the advancing column did not have a clear idea of where the enemy were, and thus could not correctly predict the best time to form into line: Ney's attack near the Convent of Buçaco seems to have been surprised like this.

When moving in column, it would be normal to leave a gap between each company so that the unit could change formation without becoming disorganised. The gap, or full distance, would be the same as the frontage of the company. This gap was closed up, as often happened, to half distance or closer, to make the column more manageable on the battlefield. If the column was closed up so there were no gaps between companies, it was described as being in close column, *en serrée* or *en masse*. Columns could be formed by division, platoon, or section. Confusingly in this context a division means two companies and platoon means one company, so a French battalion in column of divisions would be two companies wide, and three companies deep.

Allied battalions fought in line, but manoeuvred where possible, as with the French, in column. British battalions had ten companies, one of which was composed of light troops, and another of grenadiers. These would be on the left and right ends of the line respectively. Each soldier was meant to take up a regulation 22 inches, so a unit such as the 1/88th, which was composed of 679 men, would occupy just over 200 yards (just over 180 metres) if all the companies were present.[28] This would be reduced by approximately 20 yards if the light company had been sent forward to skirmish, thus leaving a frontage of approximately 180 yards. A Portuguese battalion, using the same drill as the British, would occupy a similar frontage for the same number of men.

Tactics for the British and Portuguese would be to deploy the troops in line as early as possible, and to shield the troops from enemy observation, and fire, by keeping them behind the crest of a ridge or hill until the last moment, when they would move forward and deliver

25 James R. Arnold, 'A Reappraisal of Column versus Line in the Peninsular War', *The Journal of Military History* 68, no. 2 (2004) pp.535–52.

26 Andrew Field, *Talavera: Wellington's First Victory in Spain* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2006), p.4.

27 Marie Jean Baptiste Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Campagnes de 1810 à 1815. Souvenirs militaires.* (Havre: Alph. Lemale, 1850), p.71.

28 David Dundas, *Rules and Regulations for the Formations, Field-Exercise, and Movements of His Majesty's Forces*, 2nd Edition (London: War Office, 1794), p.41.

several volleys. There would then be a cheer and charge forward with the bayonet. This style of attack is described by several eye-witnesses from both sides, and worked to good effect against Ney's attack at Buçaco. The defence of the pass at San Antonio do Cantaro followed a similar course, but the fighting was more prolonged there.

Placed in front of any battle line would be a line of skirmishers; troops chosen for their intelligence as well as their accuracy with a musket. Most accurate of all was the rifle which armed troops of several elite units in the Allied army. These troops were able to target the enemy at much longer range than those with an ordinary musket. As the light companies of the British battalions only constituted a tenth of their strength, the skirmish line was strengthened by specialist light troops. Each Allied division had a unit of rifle armed troops from the 95th, the 5/60th, or later the Brunswick-Oels *Jägers*. In some reports of the French, they may have mistaken a particularly dense Allied skirmish line as a first main battle line.[29]

The allied light infantry tactics were to try and stop the enemy skirmishers with their own light troops, disrupting their attempt to attack the main Allied battle line. The skirmishers would also attempt to harass the main enemy body as they advanced, and pick off the officers and NCOs. The objective was to disrupt and slow an enemy advance, and allow the main battle line more time to fire volleys into it. The advancing enemy units would be subject to several volleys of musketry from the main battle line, which would be followed by a bayonet charge.

Often a French regiment would detach all the *voltigeur* companies from its several battalions to act as skirmishers ahead of the attacking column, and this would reduce the size of each battalion by a sixth. There are allied accounts of French columns being preceded by swarms of skirmishers, pushing back the allied troops meant to stop them.[30] A regiment such as the 26e Ligne could throw forward more than 240 skirmishers ahead of any attack. The role of the French skirmishers would be the same as that of those of the Allied army: to push the enemy skirmishers back and stop them harassing the main unit.

The basic fighting unit of the cavalry was the squadron, often two or three to a regiment. In the French army, each squadron would comprise two companies, each of two troops; the British and Portuguese squadrons were made up of two troops. Cavalry would form and manoeuvre in two lines riding stirrup-to-stirrup and they were used in much the same way by all armies. Units of cavalry would be employed in an advanced guard because of their mobility, with small units of cavalry moving ahead of the army scouting for the enemy, and questioning the locals about routes, food and supplies.

The most common type of cavalry used by the French were the dragoons: with neither the dash of the light cavalry or the power of the cuirassiers, the dragoon was the utility version of cavalry. Dr Johnson wrote rather sarcastically that dragoons were, '… a kind of soldier that serves indifferently either on foot or horseback',[31] but this description does not do the dragoons justice. Initially raised to fight as mounted infantry, the dragoons in the

29 Jean-Nicolas-Auguste Noël (trans. Rosemary Brindle), *With Napoleon's Guns: The Military Memoirs of an Officer of the First Empire* (London: Greenhill, 2005), p.99.

30 William Grattan (ed. Charles Oman), *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814* (London: E Arnold, 1902), p.31; Sir Andrew Leith Hay, *A Narrative of the Peninsular War*, 4th ed. (London: John Hearne, 1850), p.163.

31 Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1820), 239

Peninsular made up the majority of cavalry, and were the eyes and ears of the army, as well as the escorts and picquets.

Both sides had light cavalry known as hussars. Renowned for their flamboyant dress and fighting prowess, they were the darlings of the cavalry, and excelled at picquet duty and scouting. Similar in their utility were the allied light dragoons and French *chasseurs à cheval*, less flamboyant than the hussars, but equally adept at skirmishing and piquet duty. Officially, in the British Army, hussars were categorised as light dragoons, but some regiments adopted the extravagant hussar uniform and were known as such in the army lists. These were considered light cavalry, but were equally capable of riding to the charge as the dragoons and heavy cavalry. There was no opportunity for the cavalry to distinguish itself at Buçaco because of the type of terrain over which the battle was fought, but the cavalry was employed continuously during the campaign as advanced or rear guards. Like the infantry, French cavalry units would have elite soldiers. Formed from the first company of the first squadron, they would dress in bearskins and wear red epaulettes; no such elite companies existed in the allied cavalry.

The artillery was similar in both armies. Cannon of the time consisted of smooth bore barrels mounted on a wooden carriage. Firing either solid shot or canister, they could wreak havoc amongst close formations of troops but were much less effective against troops in open or skirmish order. The artillery of the armies comprised both foot and horse regiments. The main differences were the weight of guns used, and the mobility of the batteries. Foot artillery was heavier, and tended to be placed at the beginning of an engagement with little manoeuvring during the battle. Horse artillery was meant to be more mobile, with the gunners being mounted, and was meant to be able to keep up with the cavalry. The modern term for a unit of artillery is 'battery', but during the Napoleonic Wars it was termed a 'brigade' by the allies. To confuse matters further, a Royal Horse Artillery battery was termed a 'troop'. The term battery will be used hereafter to try and remove confusion with the infantry formation called a brigade, and the cavalry formation of a troop.

The Portuguese army had only foot artillery, which was distributed along with the British and King's German Legion artillery throughout the divisions of the army. In the allied army, batteries of artillery were distributed regardless of nationality, and sometimes of type. Each battery's nominal strength was six guns. Light artillery from the Royal Horse Artillery (RHA) was attached to the Light Division and cavalry brigades.

The artillery of the *Armée de Portugal* comprised several batteries of foot and horse artillery distributed throughout the divisions of the army. The horse artillery used smaller guns, typically 4-pounder cannon and 6-inch howitzers, and only had six guns per battery. Foot artillery used either 8-pounder or 12-pounder guns and had eight guns per battery. The artillery allocated to army divisions would tend to be the 8 pounder batteries, with the 12-pounders in the reserve parc. A French foot artillery battery consisted of approximately thirty vehicles and a minimum of 140 horses.[32] It would have taken up a large amount of space, especially on a road or path where they were forced to move in single file. It would also be destructive: with an 8-pounder cannon weighing almost 1,300lbs (half a ton, or 580kg), the unmade roads and paths would have quickly broken up. This also explains to a large degree the time spent in Viseu and Coimbra to repair the carriages and caissons

32 Philip J. Haythornthwaite, *Weapons and Equipment of the Napoleonic Wars* (Poole: Blandford Press, 1979), p.75.

of the artillery and baggage. Although most the ordnance had standardised wheel sizes, there were a limited number of replacements available, and the roads were much worse than expected. Portuguese carts tended to use solid wheels, so the likelihood of finding suitable replacements en-route was small. As a consequence, wheels would need to be repaired, a skilled and time-consuming job even in peacetime.

1

Spain will not Delay us Long

By 1809, Napoleon was master of almost the whole of Europe. He had fought and defeated the Russians, Prussians, Austrians, and Spanish in a series of battles over the previous four years, and had finally defeated the Fifth Coalition against him at the Battle of Wagram in July 1809. He had achieved a form of temporary stability in central Europe by establishing the Confederation of the Rhine and imposing control on other client states, but was aware of the precarious position he held. Open rebellion in the Tyrol had been ruthlessly stamped out,[1] but there was simmering resentment from the defeated Emperors, waiting for the chance to revenge themselves against Napoleon. The situation with Austria, Prussia, and Russia, as well as other former enemies, was more unstable than Napoleon believed. For the moment, however, Britain, Spain and Portugal were the only enemies fielding armies against the French.

Napoleon desired a son to secure the future of his new dynasty, but had been unsuccessful whilst married to Empress Josephine. Napoleon also wished for a lasting alliance with Russia and Austria, and courted the Tsar's daughter as well as the Austrian Emperor's. In an attempt to bind his new empire with that of the Austrians he divorced Josephine and married Marie Louise, daughter of Emperor Francis II of Austria. The last barrier to his total dominance of Europe was now the continued resistance in the Iberian Peninsula, most notably by the British who had been at war with France since 1803. Napoleon was left with the allied army in Portugal, and the various Spanish armies and guerrillas still active in Spain. After the defeat of the Austrians, Napoleon wrote, 'As soon as I have finished here, I hope that Spain will not delay us long'.[2] Napoleon signed the Treaty of Schönbrunn with Austria on 14 October 1809, finally allowing him to begin transferring troops to the Peninsula to end the war there.

Napoleon saw the British as the archenemy, but could not compete with the Royal Navy at sea in open battle. The British, conversely, could not compete in terms of land forces to defeat the Imperial armies. Because of this impasse, the Berlin Decrees of 1806 and subsequent sanctions against Britain, commonly known as the 'Continental System', attempted

1 Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon the Great* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), p.533.

2 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, pp.263–64, 15552, Napoleon to Clarke, Schönbrunn, 18 July 1809.

to force Britain out of the war by economic and political means.[3] This blocked the import of all British goods into Europe, and all of the conquered and allied states were expected to conform. Napoleon's attempt to enforce the Continental System brought him into conflict with the Pope, and in June 1809 Napoleon annexed the Papal States for their refusal to close their ports to Britain. The Pope immediately excommunicated him. This Papal displeasure would not play well in Catholic Spain or Portugal.[4] The loss of British trade did not spell a revival of economic production in Europe, and the blockade hit European trade hard; '… because Hamburg and the Hanseatic towns … couldn't manufacture the [clothes] the Grande Armée required, their governors were forced to buy them from British manufacturers under special licences …'[5] This illustrates the awkward fact that many of Napoleon's soldiers in the coming campaigns wore uniforms made, at least in part, in British manufactories.

The French invasions of Portugal were about two distinct but interrelated desires: to complete the imposition of the Continental System; and to decisively defeat the British land forces. Portugal continued to trade with Britain, and kept open its ports to British ships and goods. Napoleon wanted the situation in the Peninsula to be concluded so that the Continental System would force Britain to negotiate a peace settlement. A defeat in the Peninsula might bring down the Tory government and return the Whigs to power, bringing Britain to the negotiating table.

Napoleon was impatient with his commanders in Spain and Portugal for failing to completely subdue the country. After the campaign of 1808 in which the French chased the British army under Sir John Moore out of the Peninsula, Napoleon failed to grasp the complexities and problems associated with attempting to control the Iberian Peninsula. In the aftermath of the French defeats at Oporto and Talavera, his generals sent misleading reports regarding the situation in Spain and Portugal. After Talavera Napoleon wrote, 'As long as they continue to attack good troops, like the English, in good positions, without reconnoitring and ascertaining whether these positions can be carried, my men will be led on to destruction, and to no good purpose'.[6] This could describe exactly the outcome of the battle fought at Buçaco just over a year later.

To achieve his objective, Napoleon would lead another offensive in Spain and Portugal in 1810. He wrote of his intention to march into Spain at the head of an army, including his Imperial Guard, and defeat the armies facing him once and for all.[7] Speaking to one of the Government Chambers he said, 'When I show myself beyond the Pyrenees, the frightened Leopard will seek the ocean to avoid shame, defeat and death'.[8] *Général de Division* Clarke, his Minister of War was told to prepare an army: 'I propose to assemble 80,000 infantry

3 Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812* (New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd, 1969), Vol.1, p.4.

4 David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), p.595; Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812*, Vol.1, p.173.

5 Roberts, *Napoleon the Great*, p.428.

6 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.72, 548, Napoleon to Clarke, Schönbrunn, 21 August 1809.

7 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.53, 16021, Napoleon to Clarke, Paris, 23 November 1809.

8 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.49, 16031, A L'ouverture De La Session Du Corps Léglslatif, Palais des Tuileries, 3 December 1809.

and 15,000 or 16,000 cavalry by the beginning of December, and to enter Spain with these reinforcements. I conclude that the enemy will by that time have evacuated the island of Walcheren'.[9] However, matters related to his forthcoming marriage to Marie Louise meant Napoleon chose to remain in Paris, and so André Massena, his most experienced Marshal, was appointed commander of the *Armée de Portugal* by Imperial Decree on 17 April 1810.[10]

There was an urgency to Napoleon's actions regarding Spain that hid a difficult truth. The war there was draining the Imperial exchequer and the financial position in France was becoming difficult. The recent war of the Fifth Coalition had cost large sums of money, and the maintenance of so many troops across Europe was telling on the French economy. Napoleon wrote,

> Let the King of Spain know that my finances are getting into disorder; that I cannot meet the enormous cost of Spain; that it is become absolutely necessary that the funds required … should be furnished by Spain … all I can do is give two millions a month towards [the army's] pay; that, if all this cannot be done, there is but one course left, that is to administer the provinces for the benefit of France, seeing that the state of my finances will not allow me to make such great sacrifices.[11]

'Administering the provinces for the benefit of France' was a euphemistic way of saying that the provinces would be taxed for the benefit of the Army, that the occupation would have to pay for itself. However, the objective of maintaining the armies in the Peninsula must not be forgotten. The enemy armies must be defeated, and opposition destroyed. By defeating the Allies in the Peninsula, the current British Tory government would most likely fall, and could be expected to be replaced by one more likely to come to terms with France, and thus trade would be reopened between the two countries. France would be able to consolidate its position in Europe, and Napoleon's personal position would be more secure.

Unlike in Britain, the French government controlled the media, including the official newspaper *Le Moniteur*, which regularly included polemic attacks against Britain. Napoleon did not need to worry about secrets being printed in the press in the same way that Wellington did. Napoleon wrote to Joseph Fouché, his Minister of Police, in 1805:

> My intention is that you write to the editors of the Journal des Débats, the Publiciste, and the Gazette de France … that I will never suffer the newspapers to say or do anything against my interests; that they may publish a few little articles where they will show some venom, but that one beautiful morning they will have their mouths shut.[12]

9 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.76, 556, Napoleon to Clarke, 7 October 1809.

10 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.116, 606, Imperial Decree, Compiègne, 17 April 1810.

11 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.102, 586, Napoleon to Berthier, 31 January 1810.

12 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.10, p.336, 8611, Napoleon to Fouché, 22 April 1805.

Napoleon issued direct orders that '… objectionable matter …'[13] from Spain was to be excluded from articles in *Le Moniteur*. Because the press and propaganda machine was known to be controlled, less weight was given to the information published in French bulletins and newspapers.[14] Indeed, the phrase 'to lie like a bulletin' was coined at this time.

Portugal had been invaded three times recently by the French: in the Franco-Spanish invasion of the War of the Oranges in 1801, by Junot's Franco-Spanish army in 1807 which occupied Lisbon, and by Soult's army in the north in 1809 when Oporto was captured. Britain and Portugal had been allies for centuries, back as far as the 14th century. Portugal, in very much the same way as Britain, was a sea-going trading nation with a developing empire spread around the world. Dependent on trade for its livelihood, any interruption would bring serious problems for the economy, and attempts to impose the Continental System by Napoleon brought him into direct conflict with the Portuguese Government.

Spain and Portugal were natural enemies, and in the War of the Oranges in 1801 Portugal had been forced to cede the territory of Olivença to Spain. Britain had sent troops to help in this war, but the forces were too small to provide any useful assistance. It was during the invasion of 1807 that the Prince Regent John and the Portuguese royal family escaped from Lisbon to Brazil aboard British warships. Rear Admiral Sir Sidney Smith had arrived at Lisbon and persuaded the Royal Family to embark under British protection rather than submit to Napoleon. As Junot's straggling army entered Lisbon, the British ships, a mixture of warships and merchantmen, could be seen leaving the Tagus.[15] The Royal Navy maintained a blockade off Lisbon, which stopped imports of food and other goods into the port, but also kept the Russian fleet under Vice Admiral Senyavin there. As a new ally of France, requests were made to him by Junot for the use of the Russian warships. Senyavin refused to allow his forces to be used by the French, but also kept discreet communications with the blockading British ships.

The Regency Council was effectively the government in Portugal until the return of the King in 1821. Members of the Council in 1810 included the Patriarch, previously the Bishop of Oporto; the Marquez de Olhão; José Antonio de Menezes e Sousa, or The Principal Sousa; the Conde de Redondo; Fernando Maria de Sousa Coutinho; and Doctor Raymundo Nogueira.[16] The appointment of this last person was opposed by Wellington, who wrote to Stuart, 'If indeed the Doctor had ever shown any talents as a political character, there might be some reason for his appointment; but as it is, it is absurd and mischievous'.[17] The

13 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.119, Napoleon to Berthier, Compiègne, 26 April 1810.

14 J. David Markham, *Imperial Glory: The Bulletins of Napoleon's Grande Armée, 1805-1814, with Additional Supporting Documents* (London: Greenhill, 2003).

15 N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), p.551.

16 Arquivo Municipal de Mafra, PT/AMM/CFLLTV/TT-CGR/045, 'Aviso Do [Secretário de Estado Dos Negócios Do Reino e Da Fazenda], João António Salter de Mendonça, Para o Governador de Armas Da Corte e Província Da Estremadura, D. António Soares de Noronha, Remetendo Uma Cópia Do Decreto de 24 de Maio de 1810 Para Conhecimento Do Conselho de Guerra', 28 September 1810.

17 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.207, Wellington to Charles Stuart, Celorico, 4 August 1810.

secretaries to the Regency performed the main role of administration, and the Minister for War and Foreign Affairs, Dom Miguel Pereira Forjaz, was a significant British ally.[18]

Following the French invasion in 1807, and the evacuation of the Royal Family, the Portuguese economy had collapsed, and what little tax revenue there was was dissipated through corruption and inefficiency. The government was unable to raise new forces through lack of funds, and requested help from Britain. The Regency Council relied to a great extent on the subsidy paid by the British government to clothe, arm and feed its army, as well as providing basic necessities for the populace, but even this was diluted by corruption. Benjamin d'Urban, a pro-Portuguese British officer serving in the Portuguese army as Quarter Master General, wrote that the Council,

> … with its usual infatuation and folly (if nothing worse) has stopped the payment of subsistence to the [Portuguese] Army, and this without a communication of any kind either to Mr. Stuart, Lord Wellington or the Marshal [Beresford] … Yet has the money for the Army Expenditure been received by the Regency, but of course, in its way through the corrupt channels of the Government, has been appropriated to other purposes and hence the deficit … and a proof afforded that the British subsidy must be applied by British hands …[19]

Some Portuguese trade was maintained with its empire, and with parts of North Africa, but payment for supplies was difficult as the Council had little in the way of ready cash. The subsidy Britain paid to Portugal amounted to £80,000 in the month 25 May to 24 June 1810,[20] and totalled some £2,000,000 by 1811.[21] In addition to this, private donations collected in London amounting to £81,000 were distributed in 1810/11 in the areas worst affected by the war.[22]

During Junot's occupation, the Portuguese army was disbanded. The better-quality troops were sent to form a Portuguese Legion in the French army, eventually being destroyed in Russia in 1812. The rest of the army, militia, and *Ordenança* were discharged. With the invasion of Spain and occupation of Portugal, the populations of both countries rose against the occupiers. Spain appealed to Britain for support, but not troops, for their fight against the French. In Portugal, the Junta of Oporto appealed for any assistance from the old ally, Britain. The Spanish junta in Galicia went so far as to offer to form an alliance, '… between Spain and Portugal against the French invaders'.[23] The Oporto junta assembled a weak force of perhaps 5-6,000 men, poorly armed and organised. The forces at Oporto avoided a direct

18 F.A. de La Fuente, Dom Miguel Pereira Forjaz: His Early Career and Role in the Mobilization and Defense of Portugal During the Peninsular War, 1807 – 1814 (PhD Dissertation, Florida State University, 1980).

19 Benjamin d'Urban (ed. I.J. Rousseau), *The Peninsular Journal, 1808-1817*, Napoleonic Library 8 (London: Greenhill, 1988), pp.169–70, December 23 1810.

20 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.106, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Celorico, 6 June 1810.

21 Michael Glover, *Wellington's Army in the Peninsula, 1808 – 1814* (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1977), p.124.

22 Monteiro Miguel Corrêa et al., *The Lines of Torres Vedras: A Defence System to the North of Lisbon* (Torres Vedras: PILT, 2011), p.194.

23 Arquivo Histórico Militar, PT/AHM/DIV/1/14/004/28, '"Proposta Do Reino Da Galiza à Junta Do Supremo Governo Do Porto" Para Que Seja Formada Uma Aliança Entre Espanha e Portugal Contra Os Invasores Franceses', 5 July 1808.

confrontation with Junot's army when the General began to concentrate his forces around Lisbon. On 1 August 1808, the British army began disembarking in Mondego Bay.

Napoleon's enemies were extensively funded by the British Government, which paid subsidies to allied countries to help them keep troops in the field against Napoleon. In addition, Britain deployed small land forces at various points around Europe, often in support of allied forces. Despite the disaster at La Coruña, and to maintain the war against Napoleon, the British Government saw fit to send more troops to Portugal later in 1809 under the command of Sir Arthur Wellesley. As part of the Fifth Coalition the British also landed troops on the island of Walcheren, off the Dutch coast, in an attempt to divert the attention of Napoleon, but subsequently these were evacuated in December 1809 after a disastrous campaign.

By the end of the Peninsular War in 1814 Wellington had a smoothly functioning and experienced staff and intelligence organisation, a force of veteran soldiers and a recent history of almost uninterrupted victories. The situation he faced in 1810 was markedly different, but would be the foundation upon which the victorious army of 1814 would be built. The British had suffered two significant defeats in 1809: La Coruña and Walcheren. Both of these had reduced the capabilities of the troops involved through disease and malnutrition. Despite this setback, Britain was still at the centre of the anti-Napoleonic movement in Europe, financially at least.

In March 1809 Wellesley had written a 'Memorandum on the defence of Portugal', the proposals of which included financial assistance to the Portuguese Government, a considerable military contribution by Britain, and above all British control of the defence of the country. The forces to be employed should not be less than 30,000 men from the British Army, with 4-5,000 cavalry, and a significant body of artillery. Well aware of the state of the Portuguese army, he recommended that 30,000 stands of arms, shoes and uniforms should be sent to Lisbon as quickly as possible for their use. The breadth of the memorandum encompassed everything Wellesley would need to begin the defence of Portugal as he saw fit. He predicted that the cost would be approximately one million pounds in the first year. Wellesley was aware that Napoleon would send reinforcements to Spain, and that at some point an attack into Portugal was to be expected. However, he was confident that, so long as the conflict continued in Spain, and a British field army was present in the Peninsula, '… the French would not [be] able to overrun Portugal with a smaller force than 100,000 men …'.[24] Wellesley urged that the measures explained in the memorandum be taken quickly,

> … as it may be depended upon that as soon as the newspapers shall have announced the departure of officers for Portugal, the French armies in Spain will receive orders to make their movements towards Portugal, so as to anticipate our measures for its defence. We ought therefore to have every thing on the spot, or nearly so, before any alarm is created at home respecting our intentions.[25]

24 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.181–82, Memorandum on the defence of Portugal, London, 7 March 1809.
25 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.181–83, Memorandum on the defence of Portugal, London, 7 March, 1809.

Wellesley was made commander in Portugal 2 April 1809 with the instruction, 'The defence of Portugal you will consider as the first and immediate object of your attention'.[26] Castlereagh emphasised his priorities, and reminded him regarding his new command in Portugal: 'In any movements you may undertake, you will, however, keep in mind, that, until you receive further orders, your operations must necessarily be conducted with a special reference to the protection of that country'.[27]

The British Government was in turmoil during the last half of 1809 and the beginning of 1810 over, amongst other things, the failed Walcheren expedition and the high cost of funding the war in the Peninsula. Castlereagh, the Minister for War, was a firm supporter of the war against Napoleon and a supporter of Wellesley, but suffered politically from the failure of the Walcheren expedition.[28] Canning, the Foreign Secretary, tried to use him as a scapegoat for the failure, which resulted in a duel between the two, and the collapse of the Portland Government. Thus Spencer Perceval became Prime Minister on 4 October 1809, and Canning and Castlereagh were replaced by Lord Liverpool and Lord Bathurst respectively.[29] The Government survived an inquiry into the Walcheren expedition, and funds for the continuation of the war against Napoleon were extended. With the survival of the government came firmer support for Wellington, aided by the recently appointed Richard, Lord Wellesley, Wellington's older brother, as Foreign Secretary.

Wellington was reluctant to discuss his strategy with the government, lest it should appear in the newspapers and inform the French. He was also the object of much discussion, known at the time as 'croaking' both in England and the army in Portugal.[30] D'Urban mentioned that in England, everyone seemed despondent about the Peninsula, and 'croaking' was like an infection spreading to the Army.[31] Letters sent back to England from senior as well as junior officers in the Army in Portugal indicated a dejected note. Letters sent to Oporto by British Officers caused consternation to the merchants there, prompting them to apply to the Admiralty for assistance in evacuation. One letter stated, 'I have seen some of the staff, who tell me that the whole force under Massena, Reynier's included, amounts to 105,000 men … You will hardly suppose that Lord Wellington will make a stand against such a force: we must retreat and eventually leave the country'.[32]

Wellington wrote to Lord Liverpool in November 1809 complaining that the British newspapers had,

> … published an account of the defensive positions occupied by the different English and Portuguese corps, which certainly conveyed to the enemy the first knowledge he had of them; and I enclose a paragraph recently published, describing the line

26 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.210–11.

27 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.210–11.

28 Thomas Creevey (ed. Herbert Maxwell), *The Creevey Papers: A Selection from the Correspondence & Diaries of the Late Thomas Creevey, M.P.* (London: John Murray, 1903), Vol.1, p.131.

29 Oman, *Peninsular War*, Vol.4, p.168.

30 Jean Jacques Pelet (ed. Donald D. Horward), *The French Campaign in Portugal, 1810 – 1811* (Minneapolis, 1973), p.89. Pelet mentions that Massena was subject to the same sort of criticism.

31 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.96.

32 Alexander Dickson (ed. John H. Leslie), *The Dickson Manuscripts: Being Diaries, Letters, Maps, Account Books, with Various Other Papers, for the Year 1810* (Cambridge: Trotman, 1987), Vol.2, p.266.

> of operation which I should follow in case of the occurrence of a certain event, the preparations which I had made for that operation, and where I had formed my magazines.[33]

In another letter to Liverpool in December 1809, Wellington noted that the information enclosed must not be shown to anyone else, '… lest it should get into print'.[34] Following an enquiry into the leaking of information to the press, Wellington issued a General Order in August 1810 against 'Incautious Correspondence' stating, 'It is impossible that many Officers of the army can have knowledge of facts to enable them to form opinions of the probable events of the campaign; but their opinions, however erroneous, must, when published, have mischievous effects'.[35] Liverpool later suggested that Wellington could stop the post back to England, something he was very reluctant to do.[36]

This problem of security led to friction between Wellesley and the government in London. He was, rightly, reluctant to share detailed information about his plans for the coming campaign, lest they appear in the next edition of the newspapers. However, the government, represented by Liverpool, was concerned that they knew little of his plans, which caused equally legitimate worries in Parliament. Thomas Creevey MP, a Whig in opposition at the time, wrote,

> Walked with Abercromby, who had had a letter from his brother, who is with Wellington's army. It is dated the 31st January, and they had just heard that a corps of 45,000 French were at Salamanca. If this be true, Wellington has very little time to effect his escape from these two armies that are approaching him in different directions. His career approaches very rapidly to a conclusion; but what is one to think, at such a period, of the King's message yesterday to Parliament to propose our taking 30,000 Portuguese into our pay?[37]

He was to write subsequently,

> Lord Hutchinson … thinks Wellington ought to be hanged. He says that in his last dispatch but one he writes word that he has 25,000 British troops—that he is expecting 5000 more—that he has 25,000 Portuguese troops almost as good as British—that the French are in the greatest difficulties in the Sierra Morena, and that Portugal is in perfect safety. In his last dispatch he has written under the greatest possible fright, and has pressed the Government for positive instructions

33 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.603, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Badajoz, 21 November 1809.

34 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.653, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Badajoz, 19 December 1809.

35 John Gurwood (ed.), *The General Orders of the Field Marshal, the Duke of Wellington, K. G., &c., &c., &c., in Portugal, Spain, and France, from 1809 to 1814, and the Low Countries and France, in 1815,* (London: Forgotten Books, 2016), Vol.2, p.179, General Order, 10 August 1810, Incautious Correspondence.

36 British Library, Add MSS 38325, 'Liverpool to Wellington, 16 February 1811'

37 Creevey, *The Creevey Papers*, Vol.1, p.128, 17 February 1810.

> whether he is to come away or stay. Lord Hutchinson thinks orders are gone for him to evacuate Portugal.[38]

The opposition would make much of the apparent impossibility of defending Portugal and retrieving the British army safely after a defeat. Given the failure of Walcheren, and other abortive operations, it is not surprising that this view was held by many both in Britain and Portugal.

The British government's attitude to Wellington's actions indicated uncertainty. In a private letter, Liverpool had asked Wellington questions about the security of Portugal, the likelihood of a French invasion, and the prospects of successfully embarking the British army.[39] He returned to these concerns frequently, offering advice on alternative operations, but always coming back to the need to embark the army from Portugal in the event of disaster. Liverpool wrote to Wellington in March 1810 and presented the Government's position thus:

> I should apprise you, however, that a very considerable degree of alarm exists in this country respecting the safety of the British Army in Portugal; and as it is always some advantage to know on a question of doubtful policy on which side it may be best to err, I have no difficulty in stating that, under all the circumstances, you would be rather excused for bringing away the army a little too soon than, by remaining in Portugal a little too long, exposing it to those risks from which no military operations can be wholly exempt.[40]

Liverpool wavered in support of Wellington, who in his turn became increasingly frustrated with the letters from Britain, and finally wrote to Liverpool on 2 April stating, 'I am perfectly aware of the risks which I incur … All I beg is, that if I am to be responsible, I may be left to the exercise of my own judgement; and I ask for the fair confidence of government upon the measures which I am to adopt'.[41]

This difficult situation between the Government and Wellington required the direct involvement of the King. The King's Military Secretary, Colonel Taylor wrote to Lord Liverpool, '… His Majesty trusted that his ministers would feel with him the advantage of suffering [Wellington] to proceed according to his judgment and discretion in the adherence to the principles which he has laid down, unfettered by any particular instructions which might embarrass him in the execution of his general plan of operations'.[42]

As late as 19 August, Wellington wrote to Liverpool of the lack of confidence the Government had in him and his strategy, stating,

38 Creevey, *The Creevey Papers*, Vol.1, pp.130–31, 23 February 1810.

39 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.587, The Earl of Liverpool to Wellington, 20 October 1809.

40 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.493, The Earl of Liverpool to Wellington, Downing Street, 13 March 1810.

41 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, 2010, Vol.3, pp.809–12, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Viseu, 2 April 1810.

42 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.515, Colonel H. Taylor to the Earl of Liverpool, 21 April 1810.

> … it has appeared to me, till very lately, that the government themselves felt no confidence in the measures which they were adopting in this country ; and not an officer has come from England, who has not told me that it was generally expected that he would, on his arrival, find the army embarking ; and even some have told me that this expectation was entertained by some of the King's ministers. These sentiments are not encouraging; and I acknowledge that I have been induced to attribute the little exertion which has lately been made in the cause to this want of confidence of the members of the government in the result of the contest.[43]

Liverpool replied, somewhat disingenuously, 'I am at a loss to conceive upon what grounds you can have supposed that the King's Ministers had no confidence in the measures adopted for the defence of Portugal'.[44]

In other ways Wellington lacked the absolute command he desired. He was unable to directly appoint his own commanders, those serving being appointed by seniority, leaving him with senior commanders in whom he had no faith, and who required continuous supervision to fulfil Wellington's orders. He wrote to his brother, 'I have terrible disadvantages to contend with. The army was and indeed still is, the worst British Army ever sent from England. The General Officers are generally very bad and indeed some of them a disgrace to the service'.[45] This situation changed as the army grew larger and Wellington's success gave him increased influence, but in 1810 Wellington had to be satisfied with those generals sent to him from London.[46]

Wellington had to form a plan for the coming campaign which accounted for the unreliability of the Spanish, the lack of financial support available from the Portuguese, the distrust of some of his own officers and Government, and reports from others that Portugal was indefensible. He knew the supply of manpower from Britain was limited, and that those forces would not be sufficient to face the French, who would outnumber the British more than two-to-one. Above all of these problems was the belief, especially by the French and many of the Portuguese, that the British would run for their ships as soon as the enemy attacked.

Wellington had been starved of the most vital item necessary for the coming campaign: money. In May 1809 he had estimated that the cost per month to the British Treasury would be some £200,000, but the supply of ready cash never seemed to reach the level of expenditure. He reported to Huskisson, the Secretary to the Treasury,

> Instead of £400,000, which you and I expected from the accounts that I should have found in Portugal, I have found not quite £100,000, and this sum was in Spanish coins, which could not have been circulated in Portugal, excepting at a considerable

43 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.234–35, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Celorico, 19 August 1810.

44 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.591, The Earl of Liverpool to Wellington, London, 10 September 1810.

45 Gwent Record Office, Raglan Papers, A/34, 'Wellington to Wellesley-Pole, 5th September 1810', n.d.

46 TNA, WO 3/597, 'Office of the Commander-in-Chief: Out-Letters (Private)', 1810.

> loss, and without revealing to the dealers in money at Lisbon the fact of our want of money …[47]

The cost would soon begin to increase as the limitations of the Portuguese contribution became clear, and dependence on the British Government increased. In the month between 25 May and 24 June 1810, the cost to Britain of maintaining the British and Portuguese armies in Portugal, from the Commissary General, was £421,565 5s 2d, which included £80,000 for the Portuguese subsidy.[48] Wellington was only able to meet approximately half of this cost, being without sufficient ready cash to settle the other debts.

Wellington was insistent that all goods and supplies be bought with coin, but the limited supply of this meant that sometimes bills were used, to be redeemed on the British Government at a later time. Never popular, the bills lost their value almost immediately they were issued, and Wellington knew that ready cash would be needed in large quantities.[49] Wellington believed he could defend Portugal, given sufficient money and support from the Government. This support was lacking until after the Parliamentary vote on the Walcheren expedition, and then money for supplies for the army was forthcoming in greater quantity.

47 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.212, Wellington to Huskisson, Secretary to the Treasury, Coimbra, 5 May, 1809.
48 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.106, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Celorico, 6 June 1810.
49 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.212, Wellington to Huskisson, Coimbra, 5 May 1809.

2

Hic Sunt Leones

Introduction

On ancient maps, cartographers would mark uncharted or dangerous territory with the warning *hic sunt leones* or 'here are lions'. For armies, especially, uncharted territory is to be avoided, at least until a reconnaissance can be undertaken. Invading a country with minimal or no topographical information or general intelligence is a dangerous thing to do.

For any army wishing to invade or occupy a country, several pieces of information are needed. Where are the enemy force? What are the defences? Which routes are practicable? What forces will I need to achieve my objective? How will my forces be sustained during and after the campaign? For the defending army similar information is required, but lacking the initiative many of the answers are, by necessity, reactive. To answer these questions fully the commanders need intelligence not only regarding the enemy forces, but also what is known today as the 'theatre of operations'. Their plans depended on the ability of their armies to manoeuvre across the country via lines of march to their objective, as well as maintaining their communications to the rear. They also depended on knowing where the defenders might take up strong defensible positions, and the weaknesses of those positions. An army marching blind into this sort of country was likely to be surprised by some of the opportunities offered by the landscape to the defenders. Defending armies usually have one significant advantage: knowledge of the land over which the campaign is going to be fought.

On initial inspection there appears to be some truth to the idea that Portugal is, '… all frontier'.[1] However, the terrain on the frontier serves to limit the freedom of movement of any army wishing to invade. There are several routes available to an invading army which would lead to the capital, but of these routes only a few were practicable for the movement of artillery and supply wagons. Sir John Moore had found a similar situation, but in reverse, during his campaign in 1808. Captain George Scovell of the Quartermaster-General's department wrote 'I had some conversation today with M[urray] about our march into Spain … with Sir John Moore and his opinion was that … he might march by 3 routes

1 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.453, Wellington to Viscount Castlereagh, Merida, 25 August 1809.

N
Atlantic
Ocean
BRAGA
GUIMARAES
VILA REAL
PORTO
Barragem da Régua
Rio Douro
Rio Tâmega
Rio Vouga
Rio Paiva
Rio Côa
Rio Águeda
Rio Agadão
Rio Erjas
Rio Ponsul
Rio Ocreza
Rio Zêzere
Rio Nabão
Rio Lis
Rio Alcobaça
Rio Almonda
Rio Sizandro
Rio Grande
Rio Maior
Rio Tejo
Rio Sorraia
Rio Caia
Rio Ardila
Rio Guadiana
Rio Odiana
Rio Tripo
Rio Ocreza
Ribeira De Ulme
Ribeira De Muge
Ribeira De Magos
Ribeira De Alpiarça
Ribeira De Vale Mula
Ribeira De Figueira
Ribeira De Cela
Ribeira De Alcabrichel
Ribeira De Caldas
Ribeira De Alenquer
Ribeira De Cheleiros
Ribeira De Ota
Ribeira De Cascalheira
Ribeira De Cheleiros
Ribeira De Cascalheira
Ribeira De Cheleiros
Ribeira De Cascalheira
Ribeira De Cheleiros

– one by Coimbra, Almeida etc, another by Abrantes and Castello Branco, and the 3rd by Elvas and Badajoz'.[2] The French had the same choices in reverse.

The route from Almeida via Ponte de Murcella to Coimbra along the Mondego was the better of several routes available north of the Serra da Estrella and in 1762 this route had been taken by a Franco-Spanish invasion force. It allowed access to the well-made road between Oporto and Lisbon which was suitable for the movement of large forces north or south.

Another invasion route was south of the Serra de Estrella via Castelo Branco and Abrantes, or via the *Estrada Nova*, which ran south of the River Zezere. Wellington wrote, 'There are other roads which lead through these mountains certainly; but these are the principal and the only roads practicable for artillery'.[3] This was the general route taken by Junot in 1807, and Wellington thought Reynier's corps might use it again in 1810.[4] This would make sense, as Junot was with the *Armée de Portugal*, and would be able to provide first-hand accounts of the terrain and roadways. In anticipation of this Wellington had several sections of the *Estrada Nova* destroyed, and posted militia units to protect those sections from being repaired. *Coronel* Lecor's troops, a mixture of Line and Militia regiments, were directed to this task.[5]

The third invasion route was via Alentejo, through Badajoz and Elvas, approaching Lisbon from the east. Problematically, this line of advance would bring any invading army to Lisbon on the wrong side of the Tagus, necessitating a crossing of the river. If the river were to be crossed, it would have to be by boat, or by one of the fords up-river from Lisbon, which would be difficult in the winter when the river was in full spate, but easier in the summer, when it was possible to cross it as far down as Salvaterra.[6] Partly as a result of this threat, Wellington ensured the defensive positions to the north of Lisbon would be down-stream of the fords or bridges, reaching the Tagus around Alhandra.[7] From this point to the sea, the only way across the Tagus was by boat.

Wellington certainly feared a two-pronged attack, from the VI and VIII Corps along the Mondego, with the II Corps advancing further south via Castello Branco or its environs. This would turn the right flank of the Allied army, positioned as it was mainly towards the Portuguese frontier at Almeida, and potentially cut the army from Lisbon and its supplies.[8] This dictated the positioning of Hill and his reinforced division around Castello Branco. However, according to *Chef de Bataillon* Pelet, Massena's first aide-de-camp, this line of advance was rejected by Massena because of, '… the size of the army as well as the nature of the country'.[9] Additionally, Marshal Soult's army of approximately 50,000 troops in the south of Spain might add complications to Wellington's situation by advancing via Badajoz

2 TNA, WO 37/7a, George Scovell, 'Diary of the Campaigns of 1809 and 1810. War Office Papers, General Sir George Scovell, Intelligence Branch of Quartermaster General in Spain', 1810, p.5.
3 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.145–47, Memorandum for Lieutenant General Hill, Alverca, 2 July 1810.
4 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.186–87, Wellington to Major General Cole, Alverca, 26 July 1810.
5 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.145–47, Memorandum for Lieutenant General Hill, Alverca, 2 July 1810.
6 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.557, Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, commanding Royal Engineers, Lisbon, 20 October 1809.
7 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.563, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Lisbon, 26 October 1809.
8 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.145–47, Memorandum for Lieutenant General Hill, Alverca, 2 July 1810.
9 Pelet, *French Campaign in Portugal*, p.140.

to threaten Lisbon from the east. Massena's freedom to develop a flexible plan was equally constrained by the orders he had received from Napoleon, which he felt obliged to follow, and the lack of real intelligence regarding his proposed route to Lisbon.

Intelligence

Military intelligence relies on three main aspects; its collection, analysis, and employment. As a resource, the collection of intelligence is not always regular. The analysis of the collected intelligence must deal with large amounts of information, much of it contradictory, useless or irrelevant, and find the kernel of fact amongst it all. There is also the question of timeliness. Old information is as useless as incorrect information, and sometimes indistinguishable. To be useful to the commanders on the spot, information needs to be quickly analysed and communicated to them for it to be employed. Both armies in this campaign struggled at various times with problems associated with all three of these aspects. Wellington had a surfeit of information which had to be sifted and distributed. Conversely, Massena had limited information, some of which was quickly shown to be incorrect.

The accumulation of intelligence was a difficult task for the French, and more straightforward for the allied commanders. However, it was not always a smooth process for the allies. In early 1810 Wellington arranged an intelligence network based on Almeida, for the purposes of, '… procuring, arranging, and forwarding information of the enemy's movements …'.[10] This intelligence was to be forwarded to Brigadier General Craufurd commanding the Light Division, Major General Cole commanding the 4th Division, and Wellington himself. The details of this network can be seen in the letters sent from Craufurd to Cole as the locations of cavalry and infantry patrols were identified, as well as their reports on the movement of enemy forces and on the practicability of roads and fords.[11] The complexity of the Allied intelligence collection can be glimpsed in a despatch from Wellington to Beresford on 10 September 1810:

> Cocks sent a dragoon with a message to Cotton yesterday evening … to inform him that a column … [was] just entering Guarda … The dragoon arrived here at 1 in the morning … The telegraph, however, tells me Cotton is at Celorico. A surgeon, taken prisoner … says that Massena's head quarters were to be moved this day … to Pinhel …[12]

Here were reports coming in from the cavalry picquets, telegraph and prisoners, all at the same time, building a picture of the developing French concentration and the allied movements.

The allied army had the benefit of a mostly friendly population, but this was subject to variations based on time and place. Following the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington complained that,

10 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.702, Wellington to Brigadier Cox, Viseu, 25 January 1810.
11 TNA, PRO 30/43/52, 'Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole: Papers', 1810.
12 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.272, Wellington to Beresford, Gouvea, 10 September 1810.

> We have not received a letter from Spain, or any intelligence, for the last ten days; and the officers who are out on the flanks of the army tell me, that not only can they get no intelligence, but can scarcely procure any body to carry their letters. This is not encouraging.[13]

Commissary August Schaumann of the Commissary-General's department related a story about an officer on the Quartermaster-General's staff who was stopped by a band of 'robbers':

> He had been sent from Seville with dispatches from Lord Wellington … They took him prisoner, and conveyed him to their hiding place in the mountains … When he told them that he was bearing dispatches, and that if they ill-treated, robbed or murdered him, Lord Wellington would wreak most drastic and terrible vengeance upon them, the robbers treated him very kindly … On the morrow … they led him back to the main road, and wishing him the best of luck, allowed him to trot away.[14]

Information was gathered from sympathetic locals, informed individuals, as well as from the guerrilla bands in Spain. Intercepted French messages were passed on, or sold, to the allies and made their way to headquarters. A Portuguese officer in French service, Mascarenhas, was arrested while heading for Paris. He had become Junot's aide-de-camp during the French occupation of Portugal in 1808, and carried a report from Massena to Berthier of the campaign including the losses sustained at Buçaco and elsewhere. The value of information obtained in this way is reflected in Wellington's response to the news of Mascarenhas' capture, writing to Charles Stuart, 'I long to see Mascarenhas' papers'.[15] Furthermore, capturing these messengers not only provided the Allies with invaluable information, but denied it to the enemy. Wellington wrote, 'This is the second dispatch which Massena has written since his entering into Portugal, both of which we have got'.[16] Mascarenhas was condemned to death by the Portuguese Government as a traitor, but Wellington disagreed with his death sentence as he feared that it would discourage deserters, and encourage reprisals against Allied soldiers and supporters who had been captured by the French.[17]

Getting prisoners from the hands of the guerrillas to the Allied army was sometimes difficult, as they were just as likely to be killed as handed over. According to Lieutenant Tomkinson of the 16th Light Dragoons, 'Five deserters this day came to us [16th August] on the banks of the Coa. They say they are badly supplied, and that if the peasants would not hurt them, desertion would be more general'.[18] Desertion was to be encouraged for the information that could be gleaned. Regarding French prisoners of the guerrillas, Wellington wrote to Liverpool, 'The greatest impediment to desertion is the danger of being murdered … This impediment was in some degree removed in the last year, by the offer of a reward

13 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.176, Wellington to Henry Wellesley, Alverca, 19 July 1810.
14 August Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1924), pp.352–53.
15 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.399, Wellington to Charles Stuart, Pero Negro, 6 November 1810.
16 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.404, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Pero Negro, 8 November 1810.
17 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.406–7, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Pero Negro, 10 November 1810.
18 William Tomkinson, *The Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, 2nd ed. (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Ltd., 1895), p.36.

…'[19] Wellington had an order issued to the *Ordenança* and Portuguese peasants offering a reward of three thousand two hundred *Reis* for the safe delivery of French deserters or prisoners, presuming they had not been mistreated in any way. This amounted to 16 days' pay for a labourer in British service.[20] If the prisoners had been badly treated, those responsible would, '… be punished in the most severe way …'[21] The amount of money offered, and the threat attached, indicated the value Wellington placed on the information received from this particular source.

Some lucky prisoners taken by the guerrillas were passed over to the allies, as Major Dickson, who had transferred into the Portuguese artillery, wrote on 6 September: 'A French serjeant [sic] of infantry brought in this day prisoner … [who] belonged to the 17th Light infantry'.[22] This unit of infantry was part of Foy's brigade, Heudelet's division, of Reynier's II Corps. Thus the unit location, composition and morale of the enemy forces could be pieced together from this type of intelligence. However, the consequence of this particular event was that Reynier threatened to burn down the village where the prisoner was taken, and hang three of the villagers, unless the sergeant was returned. Reprisals such as those threatened by Reynier did nothing to improve the chances of any French soldiers who were unlucky enough to fall into the hands of either the guerrillas or the peasants.

The Allies had an extensive network of spies in both Spain and Portugal, and the value Wellington placed on these can be determined from the dispatch he wrote to Lieutenant General Sir Stapleton Cotton on 11 August, 'Pay the spies any thing you think they deserve. If you are certain they go to Valverde, you should pay them very well, as it is a service of much danger. Give them rations as well as payment, which will probably encourage them more than money'.[23]

Senior commanders established their own intelligence networks of 'correspondents' and spies. D'Urban comments on letters from, '… the Correspondent in Santarem, as well as many concurring reports and accounts …'[24] which indicated the retreat of the French from their positions around that town. There were many 'correspondents' in both countries, probably the most famous being the one in Salamanca. Wellington wrote to him directly in September 1810, approving a method of communication, offering aid and money.[25] This type of spy was behind enemy lines, providing information to Wellington on the movement of troops and supplies, and also forwarding intercepted messages. This particular correspondent was Father Patrick Curtis, Rector of the Irish College in Salamanca, and Professor of Natural History and Astronomy at the University. In this social position he had contact with some of the higher placed officers in the French army, but would also have freedom of movement around the university town, observing the comings-and-goings of French troops.

19 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.44, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Celorioco, 1 May 1810.

20 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.259, Wellington to Major General Leith, Gouvea, 6 September 1810.

21 Arquivo Histórico Militar, PT/AHM/DIV/1/14/270/09, Ajutante-General do Exercito Portuguez Mosinho Manoel de Brito, 'Ordem Do Duque Wellington Para Serem Recompensadas as Pessoas Que Entregaram Desertores e Castigados Os Que Trataram Mal' (Headquarters at Lagioza, 17 August 1810).

22 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, pp.273–76, 6 September 1810.

23 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.223, Wellington to Cotton, Celorico, 11 August 1810.

24 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.189.

25 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.268, Wellington to the Correspondent at Salamanca, Gouvea, 9 September 1810.

On several occasions Wellington specifically requested, '… an intelligent officer …'[26] to be used for information gathering and communications, but men of intellect were not necessarily that easy to find in the army. Wellington asked Cotton to, 'Be so kind as to leave on this side of the Mondego an intelligent officer, either Krauchenberg or Cordemann, or Cocks, with about a squadron, to observe the enemy's movement between the Daõ and the Mondego, and do you take care to keep up a communication with him'.[27]

The type of intelligent officer Wellington seems to be referring to was one who was capable of independent action, and taking risks, whilst obtaining the greatest amount of material. The stereotype of educated men collecting intelligence on dangerous mission was exemplified in the 'exploring officers' of the period. Wellington developed an extremely efficient intelligence gathering network, which included 'exploring officers' and others whose role was to make maps and topographical notes of areas of the country, identifying salient points about the area and how troops might travel and subsist. Probably the best known was Colquhoun Grant who rode behind enemy lines dressed in full uniform, so that he would not be thought of as a spy. In addition to observing the enemy, he had a network of correspondents well placed in the country which provided him with information.[28] Wellington held these men in high regard, and was troubled when they were captured, wounded, or killed. John Waters of the 1st Foot was an exploring officer who epitomised the stereotype, and was taken prisoner whilst on reconnaissance near the Coa. Wellington wrote to Beresford, 'You will be concerned to hear that Waters is at last taken prisoner. He crossed the Coa alone, I believe, yesterday morning, and was looking at the enemy through a spying glass, when 4 hussars pounced upon him'.[29] There was some relief when he returned, having refused *parole* and escaped from captivity.[30]

A Corps of Guides was formed in the allied army, originally in 1808, to act as guides to the different divisions of the army, but after being re-formed by Scovell in 1809 with an establishment of 42 officers and men, they were employed mainly as despatch carriers and messengers.[31] Their number was increased to 50 privates and 30 officers and NCOs in November 1810 as their usefulness was recognised.[32] Their role was expanded to include reconnaissance and the preparation of maps and itineraries. The guides were recruited from locals, and perhaps also sometimes prisoners of war.[33]

Tactical intelligence was collected by the Guides, exploring officers, and also by picquets set as the advanced guard of the army. In the allied army, this advanced guard often comprised a brigade of cavalry supported by Craufurd's Light Division and perhaps a battery of Royal Horse Artillery. Individuals and small units would be dispatched to collect information at a

26 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.288, Wellington to Cotton, Cortiçó, 18 Sept. 1810, 6:00 a.m.

27 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.291, Wellington to Cotton, Cortiçó, 20 Sept. 1810.

28 TNA, PRO 30/43/53, 'Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole: Papers', 1810, For example, see Lecor to Cole, Castello Branco, 19 June 1810.

29 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.724, Wellington to Beresford, Sabugal, 4 April 1811.

30 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.745, Wellington to Beresford, Villar Formoso, 13 April 1811.

31 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.265–66, General Order, Oporto, 23 May 1809.

32 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.423, General Order, Alemquer, 17 November 1810; TNA, WO 37/10/5, 'Papers Relating to the Corps of Guides', 1808; TNA, WO 37/8, 'Monthly Reports of the Corps of Guides', 1809 to 1814; TNA, WO 37/10/13, 'Names of Officers Appointed to the Corps of Guides', 1809.

33 S.G.P Ward, *Wellington's Headquarters* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2017), p.126.

particular point following a request from someone such as Scovell or Murray, or the reports would go directly from the picquets to headquarters to be analysed. The light cavalry of both armies was extensively employed in this scouting role during the campaign.

The cavalry was also employed on general lookout duties. Wellington sent orders to Cotton that he should, '… keep an officer with a good glass always upon the highest part of the hill above Maçal do Chaõ, from when he will command a view of the whole country'.[34] Intelligence gathering reduced the effectiveness of the cavalry, as small units were sent to observe the French, and to accompany some observing officers as they roamed the countryside. Outposts were also arranged in front of the army to warn of enemy movements. Tomkinson wrote of the arrangement of light cavalry between Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida:

> Two squadrons of the 16th [Light Dragoons], with one of the Hussars, in Gallegos; the other detached to Villa de Puerca, a league to the left, watching the passes of Barba de Puerca, and the others up to our chain of posts … We never unsaddle excepting in the evening, merely to clean the horses; and at night the men sleep in their appointments, with their bridle reins in their hands, ready to turn out in an instant.[35]

The cavalry (and sometimes infantry) were also used as letter-carriers, posted between formations to pass information.[36] These duties had the effect of reducing the numbers available for general service in each individual regiment. Wellington was conscious of the effect that continuous patrols and rear-guard action would have on his cavalry. He wrote to Cotton, 'I fear that we shall knock up the regiments if we don't allow them to get to their ground; and the hussars, having observed the enemy into Celorico, should be allowed to retire to their cantonments'.[37]

Information was also compiled by individual officers in their journals and diaries. Alexander Dickson of the Portuguese Artillery, for example, kept a diary in which he remarked on his movements, the local topography as well as other events of significance, and in typical British fashion, on the weather. Some of the entries in his diaries are long and full of information, others short, such as the entry for 28 April 1810: 'Rainy at intervals, Thermometer 61. Nothing extraordinary'.[38] In many entries he comments on the state of the roads and bridges, and how many troops a village or town is likely to accommodate. The same type of observations can be seen in other journals.[39]

It was much more inconvenient for the French to gather intelligence, and difficult to get that intelligence to its desired destination. Unlike British exploring officers, the French could not roam the countryside individually or even in small groups. The French Army relied

34 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.263, Wellington to Lieutenant General Cotton, Gouvea, 7 September 1810.

35 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.25.

36 Ward, *Wellington's Headquarters*, pp.124–25.

37 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.285, Wellington to Cotton, Gouvea, 16 September 1810.

38 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, 1987, Vol.2, p.197.

39 Tomkinson, *Diary*; d'Urban, *Journal*; Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*; William Webber (ed. Richard Henry Wollocombe), *With the Guns in the Peninsula: The Peninsular War Journal of 2nd Captain William Webber, Royal Artillery*, Napoleonic Library 18 (London: Greenhill Books, 1991).

to a greater extend on spies for broader information, or reconnaissance in the immediate vicinity of the army for tactical intelligence. French spies were sometimes apprehended by the cavalry patrols attempting to cross the front line, as in the case of a '… suspicious person …' detained by the 14th Light Dragoons.[40]

The French had the difficulty of trying to obtain information in a hostile country, and sometimes with unreliable troops. A reconnaissance party of the Chasseurs Hanovrienne, composed of mainly German troops, was taken prisoner on 22 August by a detachment of the 13th Light Dragoons and Portuguese cavalry. They were, '… very glad at being taken'.[41] Reconnaissance was undertaken by senior officers, often from the engineers or artillery. *Capitaine* Nöel wrote,

> … I went with General Clausel on a reconnaissance that took us to within a league of the Douro, and then on another to Pinhel. We were trying to find a way by which the artillery could be moved. I had never seen a countryside so battered and torn up as this part of Portugal. The roads were barely fit for horses.[42]

Much intelligence was gathered by the French from newspapers published in England. Napoleon instructed Berthier to write to Massena with intelligence regarding the strength of the Allied army in Portugal: 'Write to the Prince of Essling that it appears from the English newspapers that the English army consists of only 23,000 English and Germans, and 22,000 Portuguese …'.[43] Operational intelligence was gathered in Paris from the same source, when the Army of Portugal was cut off in front of the Lines at Lisbon. A message to Soult, instructing him to attack La Romana's Spanish forces, relied on information, '… extracted from the English newspapers …'.[44] Information obtained from the British newspapers was published in *Le Moniteur* for general consumption, and was a cause of great annoyance for Wellington.[45]

The French had their own network of spies and sympathisers,[46] but they ran a far greater risk than those of the Allies. The *afrancesados,* supporters of the French in Spain and Portugal, made attempts to send information across the lines between the armies, and in one instance the Marquis d'Alorna, a Portuguese nobleman collaborating with the French, sent his wife a note which was intercepted. The courier revealed more than just the contents of the note: 'The lady sent to your head quarters says that Massena was to be this day at

40 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.275, The Adjutant-General to Cotton, 11 September, 1810.

41 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, 1987, Vol.2, p.261, Letter to Major General MacLeod, Sarzedas, 27 August 1810.

42 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.94.

43 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.122, 617, Napoleon to Berthier, Dieppe, 27 May 1810.

44 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.153, 661, Napoleon to Berthier, Fontainebleau, 25 October 1810.

45 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.154, 666, Napoleon to Berthier, Fontainebleau, 3 November 1810; Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.149, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Alverca, 3 July 1810.

46 Jean Baptiste Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna Rédiges d'apres Les Documents Qu'il a Laissés et Sur Ceux Du Dépôt de La Guerre et Du Dépôt de Fortifications* (Paris: Paulin and Lechavelier, 1848), Vol.7 pp.279, 494.

Pinhel, to-morrow at Trancoso. I enclose a note which she brought from Alorna to his wife, which rather shows that the route of the main body is by Viseu'.[47]

As the case of Mascarenhas proved, any Portuguese who was captured working for the French was liable to be executed. Another source of intelligence for the French was the steady stream of deserters who came over to them. Tomkinson mentions five men of the 16th Light Dragoon having deserted to the French in the first part of September. These men were already known as troublemakers, and took the opportunity to desert to avoid a general court-martial.[48] In this way, the French command was able to build up a very accurate picture of the location of Wellington's forces at the time Massena took command of the *Armée de Portugal* and subsequently throughout the campaign.[49] Pelet was still able to accumulate an accurate picture of the Allied dispositions in February 1811, by means of, '… reports from the front line, from spies and emissaries, and from deserters'.[50] Pelet tells us that he, '… spared no trouble nor pains to collect information from all sides'.[51]

During the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida the French constantly reported the sighting of small groups of Allied cavalry, maintaining visual contact whilst avoiding a fight.[52] In this way, the Allied commanders knew where the French forces were, and how far their plans had developed. Conversely, for tactical and operational intelligence the French had to send large forces on reconnaissance which were observed by small allied or irregular forces. Because the villages in the path of the French advance were generally abandoned, it was very difficult for these reconnaissance columns to obtain much information, and their presence in strength indicated to the Allied command the general direction of French movements.

Overall, however, French intelligence was flawed in one important aspect; detailed knowledge of the topography of the country, even during its occupation. Moving the army in Portugal was to be extremely difficult. Tactical and operational intelligence was denied to the French as the countryside was emptied of people and supplies in front of their advance, and around them as they sat in front of Lisbon. Villagers took to the hills or were evacuated to Lisbon to deny the French information and food. They were cut off from news and information from other French forces in the Peninsular by the militia and *Ordenança* operating between the Portuguese frontier and the Tagus, and information which the French attempted to share was intercepted and used by the Allied army.

The analysis of intelligence falls into three main categories; knowledge of the enemy's position and intentions; knowledge of the theatre of operations; knowledge of one's own troops' locations. The aim is to identify the main vulnerability of the enemy and to strike there. The two armies handled these in different ways.

For the allies, the collection and collation of information was the responsibility of the Quartermaster General's department and Royal Staff Corps in the British army, although historically it had been the responsibility of the Adjutant General's department. In the

47 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.284, Wellington to Marshal Beresford, Gouvea, 15 September 1810.
48 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.39.
49 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.25 & 233.
50 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.400.
51 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.142.
52 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.57.

French army the analysis seems to have been done mainly by the staff officers, notably Pelet. According to Pelet's account of the 1810 campaign he was solely responsible for the accumulation and interpretation of intelligence information for Massena.[53]

In the Allied army, officers such as Scovell were kept continually busy with the accumulation of intelligence, and also had to improvise methods of breaking French codes used to protect some dispatches.[54] However, much of the analysis of intelligence was done by Wellington himself with Murray, Scovell, and others acting as conduits as well as assisting in analysing the collected information. Intelligence was often corroborated by other sources, and Wellington was keen to verify accounts from one source with knowledge from another as frequently as possible. Importantly, he exchanged this intelligence information with his senior officers, keeping them abreast of the movements and possible intentions of the enemy.[55]

Wellington made great use of the dispatches captured by Spanish and Portuguese guerrillas and militia. This type of intelligence allowed him to build up a complete view of the French forces in Spain. Even those forces not directly opposed to him were of interest. He wanted to know where they were based, and how many troops they had. This type of intelligence directly affected Wellington's over all planning, and his deployment of troops. The French might make use of troops in different parts of the country to reinforce Massena's army, and knowledge of their location and strength would be invaluable. Indeed, Wellington expected this reinforcement to happen, and Napoleon sent orders to Soult and *Général de Division* Kellermann, governor of Valladolid, to support Massena's invasion, but both seem to have ignored them.[56] Wellington was always cautious about being cut off from his lines of supply back to Lisbon, and ultimately on a location to embark the army.

Much intelligence was directed at finding out where the enemy was, but this relied to a great extent on accurate maps to assess their true dispositions. The enemy's intentions could be understood from captured dispatches and prisoners, as well as deserters. However, the level of information most prisoners and deserters had was relatively low but given enough of them a broad picture could be drawn. Wellington was in possession of several dispatches documenting the structure and location of the French forces in Spain. In the middle of July, Wellington wrote to his brother that,

> … I have lately received the 'Emplacement' of the French army on the 1st June 1810, from which I have extracted the state of their forces in Spain and Catalonia. I enclose a return of the number of battalions of infantry, squadrons of cavalry, and companies of artillery, which they had in each corps d'armee on the 1st June …[57]

53 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.152–53.

54 Mark Urban, *The Man Who Broke Napoleon's Codes: The Story of George Scovell* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001).

55 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.271, for example, Wellington to Lieutenant General Cotton, Gouvea, 10 September 1810.

56 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, pp.386–87, 16519, Napoleon to Berthier, Le Havre, 29 May 1810.

57 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.176, Wellington to Henry Wellesley, Alverca, 19 July 1810.

Thus, Wellington had detailed information about not only the strength of the French forces, but their deployment throughout the Peninsula. With this, he had the information necessary to modify his operations within his overall strategy. Napoleon gleaned the same information from British newspapers, and Pelet obtained detailed information from deserters.

The accumulation of information and its use can clearly be seen in a few examples from Wellington's dispatches. He wrote to Craufurd on 6 June,

> … we have a tolerable notion of the strength of Ney's corps; and I yesterday received a letter from Gen. Mahy, who has a return of Junot's corps of the end of April, I believe intercepted near Irun … In one of the intercepted letters … 3 Generals of division of infantry are named, viz : Solignac, La Grange and Clausel … There are no troops left in Astorga, excepting one battalion of Swiss, of whom 24 deserted in one day … I have requested Gen. Mahy to put in motion his division and all the Spanish in that quarter, and have ordered the Portuguese militia … to move towards the Douro.[58]

Wellington's strategy was threatened by an attack in the south via Alentejo, and he feared a French assault on Badajoz early in September 1810, until informed that Reynier's II Corps had moved north to unite with Ney and Junot.[59] This allowed him to order Hill to move the troops under his command north to join up with the rest of the army. This deployment and redeployment of forces relied on solid intelligence regarding the roads and routes which the army could take between locations, and this relied on accurate topographical intelligence.

Unlike the campaigns in Central Europe, Spain and Portugal were not well served with maps. Those generally available to both sides were limited to the commercially printed maps of Jefferys, Eloy, Faden, Mentelle, and Lopéz. Other maps had been made by various military engineers and surveyors before the invasion, and Murray had instructed officers to survey many parts of the country that would become the theatre for the coming campaign.[60]

The most infamous map used in the 1810 campaign, that of Thomas Lopéz, was first published in 1779.[61] Created from information supplied by civil clerks and church authorities, as well as data taken from such sources as Castro's road-book,[62] the map was not based on a trigonometrical survey of the country, and this was demonstrated in the inaccuracies in distances between locations, and the location of towns and villages themselves. The Lopéz map is as much as 28 percent out in distances measured between towns in some parts of Central Portugal.[63] This is particularly apparent in the area of Portugal chosen as the initial invasion point. Lopéz distorts the space between towns and villages, making them

58 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.104, Wellington to Brigadier General Craufurd, Celorico, 6 June 1810.

59 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.264, Wellington to H. Wellesley, Gouvea, 7 September 1810; Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.276, Wellington to Hill, Gouvea, 13 September 1810.

60 Instructions for Assistants in the Quarter Master General, TNA, WO 37/10, 'Correspondence, Reports and Maps', 1762 to 1812.

61 Tomás Lopez de Vargas Machuca, 'Atlas Geográfico de España, Que Comprehende El Mapa General Del Reyno, y Los Particulares de Sus Provincias', 1779.

62 Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, HG 11878 P, João Bautista De Castro, 'Roteiro Terrestre de Portugal' (Lisboa: Miguel Manescal da Costa, 1748).

63 Raeuber, *Renseignements*, pp.58–59.

appear closer together than they actually are. Additionally, some of the roads marked on the map are no more than footpaths, whilst other major roads are not marked at all. The Lopéz map held at Queen's University Belfast, taken from the French Army at Vitoria in 1813, has marked on it in red pencil the route taken by Massena during the invasion of 1810. Oman cites this map as the actual set used by Massena's headquarters staff, and Horward states that, 'The red lines on the map are those made by Massena and his staff in 1810 and 1811'.[64] There is no proof that this was marked on it by Massena or any of his staff, and it is therefore to be used with caution as evidence of its employment during the campaign.

The *Carta Militar* published by Eloy,[65] had been surveyed by Portuguese Royal Engineers, but was also inconsistent in its measurement of distance. Eloy is exclusively a route-map and displays no information regarding the nature of the topography. Distances between locations are marked in Portuguese *leguas* and also shown in the amount of time it would take to travel between locations. Dickson noted that this map was subject to errors in its placement of villages, which would make planning and implementing movement schedules very difficult.[66] This was also used as the basis for the map in Eliot's 'A Treatise on the Defence of Portugal', in which he comments, 'The Portuguese leagues are, in general, about four English miles and a fifth each, but the traveller must not be surprised if he finds them sometimes six or seven miles … The Portuguese royal leagues are … more than three English miles and a half …'.[67]

Jefferys' map was published in England in 1762,[68] but had limited usefulness as many roads which existed were not shown on it. The route between Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, for example, was shown as only one road crossing the Agueda at San Felices de los Gallegós. Even Lopéz showed several routes between these places, however inaccurately, and the *Carta Militar* shows the direct route between the fortresses passing by La Concepción. Later versions of the Jefferys map were published in England by Faden. However, Faden produced a 'New Map of Spain and Portugal' in 1810, which is presumably the one Warre requested that his father send him.[69] He asked for, '… a map of Spain and Portugal, published by Fadan [sic], and compiled by Nantiat … and Col. D'Urban … begs me to procure him one also'.[70]

Other 'itineraries' or 'road-books' were available which provided distances between locations in tabular form, along with other useful information about inns and post-routes. Dickson refers to Freire's *Descriçãm Corográfica do Reino de Portugal* as a source of information.[71] Freire also seems to be the basis for Eliot's work. However, the information contained

64 Oman, *Peninsular War*. Vol.4, p.174; Horward, *The Battle of Bussaco*, p.36.

65 Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, cota CC-1226-R, Lourenço Homem da Cunha de Eça, 'Carta Militar Das Principaes Estradas de Portugal' (Lisbon: Romão Eloy, 1808).

66 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.1, p.49.

67 William Granville Eliot, *A Treatise on the Defence of Portugal*, 2nd ed. (London: T Egerton, 1811), p.75.

68 Thomas Jefferys, 'Mappa Ou Carta Geographica Das Reinos de Portugal e Algarve' (London, 1762).

69 Jasper Nantiat, 'A New Map of Spain and Portugal, Exhibiting the Chains of Mountains With Their Passes The Principal & Cross Roads, With Other Details Requisite for the Intelligence of Military Operations' (London: Faden, 1810).

70 William Warre, *Letters from the Peninsula, 1808-1812* (London: John Murray, 1909), pp.115–17, Coimbra, 21 March 1810.

71 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.1, p.81; Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, HG 5379 P, Antonio de Oliveira Freire, 'Descripçam Corografica Do Reyno de Portugal' (Lisboa: Miguel Rodrigues, 1739).

in these books was not of high quality and would be of dubious value to a commander moving troops any distance. According to Ward, '… none of them is listed among the Q.M.G.'s documents, and their value must have been doubtful'.[72]

Marching orders were alike in all armies of the period, stating the destination of the unit, and probably the route by which it would reach it. The similarity can be seen in the initial orders of march for the *Armée de Portugal* to Viseu, and those for Wellington's forces during the first few days of the invasion.[73] For a commander to issue these orders the distances between towns and villages needed to be known so that an estimation could be made for the timing of the march. In the allied army, marching tended to start early in the morning, around 3:00 a.m. or 4:00 a.m., and finish mid-morning, so as to limit exposure during the hottest part of the day. The condition of the roads and tracks also needed to be known, so that wagons and artillery could be directed along routes suitable for heavy wheeled transport. The condition and width of bridges was an essential piece of information in this respect. Weak or narrow bridges could hold up the advance of an army for long periods if just one wagon or gun became stuck. In all of these respects the maps mentioned above failed to provide the necessary information.

We are used to the accuracy of maps, even before the digital revolution provided us with GPS and maps on smart phones. We take for granted that if a map shows a road, then that road will exist. Modern maps also probably classify the road and we make assumptions based on this as to what suitability each road type has for vehicles. A different set of standards applies to the military demands placed on map makers. The generals needed to know more information, explicitly stated, than did civilians. Descriptions of the terrain, is it suitable for men, horses, artillery? How long does it take to get from one place to another?

From 1791 onwards, the Ordnance Survey in Britain was using trigonometrical surveying to measure and map the South East of England in case of a French invasion. At the time, accurate theodolites were large (six feet tall and with a horizontal circle of three feet diameter, weighing some 200lbs), and therefore not something that could be used easily on campaign in proximity to the enemy. Some military maps on campaign in Spain and Portugal were created using trigonometrical measurement by the use of plane tables,[74] but others relied on the knowledge and experience of the officers and men compiling them. In the British Army, these were frequently 'exploring officers' or staff of the QMG's department. The French and Portuguese tended to employ cavalry units and engineering officers to make reconnaissance. Dickson explains the method for measuring distances using only his telescope: 'With the micrometer scale in my glass I measured the distance to my house, taking for an object the height of a window 7 ft 7 in, which subtended 4 divisions … [giving the] distance 2411½ yards'.[75]

72 Ward, *Wellington's Headquarters*, p.105.

73 SHD, 7C9, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance', 1810, Dispositions générales pour l'entrée en Portugal; General Sir George Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas Containing Plans of the Principal Battles, Sieges and Affairs in Which the British Troops Were Engaged During the War in the Spanish Peninsula and the South of France from 1808 to 1814* (London: J Wyld, 1841), p.25, Orders to Lieutenant General Sir Brent Spencer, G. Murray, QMG, 19 September 1810.

74 TNA, MPH 1/152/2, 'Plan Showing Fields near Abrantes, and Bridge of Boats across the River [Tagus]', 1808.

75 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, pp.175–76.

There were stylistic differences in the production of maps, but when an officer was making a map whilst in the saddle the niceties were usually dispensed with, and only the necessities were marked down. An example of this can be seen in the very rough sketching by Scovell in his report on the roads between Leiria and Condeixa.[76] Such information could then be worked on once the reports and sketches were returned to the relevant officers at the headquarters. From these sketches and reports, maps such as those produced by Captain Willumin of the Royal Staff Corps, could be made.[77] These are fine examples employing sfumato styling, a method of smoothing the transition between colours, to show the topography of the land. Large scale maps and mapping was not sophisticated enough to be used for tactical purposes: the positioning of troops tactically still relied on the general seeing the ground to be fought over. What they were used for was operational information and intelligence. Because of the circumstances that obtained in the Peninsula, preparing such maps was easier for the Allies than it was for the French.

Wellington was ever mindful of the need to understand the topography over which he would be expected to campaign and fight. Often he was to be found examining the landscape and riding over what would later become the battlefields. He later commented, both about Buçaco and Waterloo, that he had seen the positions before and reconnoitred them personally; even the Lines of Torres Vedras were reconnoitred personally by Wellington for several days before planning began. He understood the importance of intelligence not only about the enemy but about the countryside itself. As such, Wellesley's staff worked tirelessly to compile information about the country of Portugal in addition to their efforts to assess the strengths and intentions of the enemy.

Much reliance was placed on officers who were able to sketch and draw, and there were two distinct styles of map sketching: first was the quick sketch made without instruments, as taught by Jarry at the Royal Military College at High Wycombe;[78] second was the more detailed method using instruments taught at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich.[79] Colonel George Murray, Wellington's Quarter-Master General, made use of the officers educated in the manner of the new system at High Wycombe and Marlow by Jarry.

Wellington had an, '… excellent map and topographical accounts …'[80] of the area around Torres Vedras when he landed in Portugal in 1808, and there is evidence from Wellington's dispatches to indicate he soon had a copy of Vincent's plans for the defence of Lisbon.[81] Wellington also had access to Lopéz's maps,[82] however deficient they were. Parts of Portugal had been mapped by Portuguese Military engineers before and during the French invasions of 1807/8 and 1809, and these reports and maps were certainly available to Wellington.

76 TNA, WO 37/11/19, George Scovell, 'Report (with Sketches) on the Road from Leiria to Condeixa by Soure', 1810.

77 TNA, WO 78/5960, William Willumin, 'Sketch of the Action Fought near Almeida, July 1810', n.d. ; Ward, *Wellington's Headquarters*, p.110. Ward mistakenly spells the officer's name as Willermin.

78 Richard Glover, *Peninsular Preparation, The Reformation of the British Army, 1795-1809* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp.203–4.

79 Charles Raeuber, 'Military Topographical Reconnaissance in Portugal, 1810', in *New Lights on the Peninsular War* (Lisboa: British Historical Society of Portugal, 1991), p.6.

80 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.142, Notes of the Court of Inquiry into the Convention of Cintra.

81 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.145, Colonel Vincent's Report upon the Defence of Portugal, enclosure to letter from George Murray to Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Wellesley, 1 October 1808.

82 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.326, Wellesley to the Right Honourable J.H. Frere, Abrantes, 26 June 1809.

He did not, however, have a reliable and accurate map of the whole country, or the topographical information to go with it.[83] This situation was rectified over the next two and a half years, until Wellington had at his fingertips knowledge of most of the country and the rivers and roads within it. This was compiled from many sources, with Portuguese maps of the period, including the military map by Eloy, marked, '… sent to Col. Murray …'.[84]

As Quarter-Master General, Murray was responsible for obtaining, collating, and copying information and maps for the British army in the Peninsula. This information would be compiled into larger maps, and the distances and number of billets added to the existing information tables. There were several members of Wellington's staff continually involved collating and duplicating this material.[85] Reconnaissance was undertaken by the Royal Staff Corps, QMG Department, and the Corps of Guides, and the information provided was compiled into individual maps, such as the 'Plan of all the roads between Mondego and Serra de Estrella'.[86] This map was drawn by Agostinho Albano da Silveira Pinto of the Corps of Guides and shows general road types and river lines. The information might be combined with that shown in other maps denoting fords on rivers.[87] This would then be amalgamated with other material to produce a master map which contained all the information required by any commander. The type of source information for the compilation of maps can be seen in the example of a report which includes a map of the road from Loredo to Penacova, to the south of Buçaco.[88] The map has been drawn using pencil in a rough manner, and then overdrawn using ink. Each of the locations is accompanied by a number, which in this case represents the number of men who could be billeted. Some distances to villages off the main road are shown in leagues. On the following page is another sketch map showing the road from Loredo to Botaõ. It appears the author has had two attempts at drawing the sketch; whether the first was abandoned because of an ink smudge or because of an error is difficult to tell. These two sketches show the roads to the south of the Buçaco position. The report describes in detail the route, how practicable it is for artillery in various places, and how much repair would be required to make it fully practicable. Given that Wellington's troops had been in this region for several months, this shows that even in the most benign of circumstances, it was difficult to reconnoitre every inch of ground. It also shows how military reconnaissance was vital to the creation of detailed, and informative, maps. Maps which contained all the available information were then copied by tracing for distribution to commanders.[89] All officers of the QMG Department were instructed to,

> … acquire a knowledge of the Country, which is the Theatre of operation of the Army. This suppose [sic] not only an acquaintance with the natural and Political

83 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.112, Wellesley to Lieutenant General Sir Hew Dalrymple, Zambujal, 5 September 1808.

84 Raeuber, 'Military Topographical Reconnaissance in Portugal, 1810', pp.168–70.

85 Ward, *Wellington's Headquarters*, p.110.

86 TNA, MPH 1/1007/3, Agostinho Albano, 'Plan of All Roads between Mondego and Serra Da Estrella', 1 August 1810.

87 TNA, MPH 1/1007/4, 'Sketch of the Tagus from Abrantes to Villa Franca Pointing out the Situation Where That River Is Fordable', September 1810.

88 TNA, WO 37/11/13, 'Report (with 2 Sketch Maps) on Reconnaissance of the Country to the South of Bussaco', 1810.

89 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.523, Wellington to Beresford, Cartaxo, 14 January 1811, 10:00 a.m.

> Divisions of the Country and with Its principal Features, but also detailed Local information …[90]

The kind of topographical intelligence that these officers were asked to collect is summed up in a note from George Murray to Captain Scovell, in which he wrote,

> Captain Scovell will proceed to Reconnoitre the River which forms a deep Ravine upon the road between Viseu and Tondella. He will make a sketch of this River and its banks, from its source to its mouth where it falls probably into the River Daõ.
>
> The Sketch is … to represent the nature of the Banks of the River, the Bridges and Fords that cross it, and the Roads leading to and from them, and where these Roads lead to.
>
> The Sketch is to be accompanied by a report in writing, describing particularly the features of the ground in the neighbourhood of the River, and how far any advantage might be taken of them to impede the passage of an Enemy advancing from Viseu towards Coimbra.
>
> Whether the construction of the Bridges would occasion any considerable impediment to an Enemy.
>
> Whether the River becomes impassable in consequence of heavy Rains, and whether it continues so for a considerable time, or falls again in a few hours after the Rain has ceased. Also whether the Roads on its banks can be destroyed or obstructed, and what time and labour would be requisite for that purpose, or for the obstruction of the Bridges.[91]

The result, written in a clear hand, is several pages long, with information relating to the quality of roads and bridges, their construction and practicality. It is a fine example of military intelligence gathering.

As well as gathering information for map making and planning, during a battle the QMG Department and Royal Staff Corps were instructed to,

> … note accurately the situation of the several divisions and regiments of the allied troops previous to the engagement, as likewise that of the artillery.
>
> They will note likewise the situation of the troops and artillery of the enemy, and the formation and direction of his attacks.
>
> They will make memorandums of all the changes that take place during the action, on either side, and, as far as they can, of the circumstances which appear to have given occasion to them. They will note the hour of any circumstance of importance taking place.
>
> The Officers who are attached to divisions, or to particular stations, will observe chiefly what passes in their own neighbourhood. The other Officers will note

90 TNA, WO 37/10/25, 'Instructions to Officers of the Quarter-Master General's Department', 1810.

91 TNA, WO 37/10/14, 'Original Instructions to Captain Scovell by Sir George Murray Regarding a Reconnaissance of the River D'Asnos (or Coitos) from Its Source to Its Junction with the River Dao', 14 January 1810, Note from George Murray, QMG, at Vizeu, 14 January 1810.

> generally whatever comes under their observation wherever they may chance to be during the engagement.[92]

The map showing the battle on the Coa, drawn on 8 September 1810 by Captain Willumin, demonstrates the principles laid out above. It uses watercolour to show the landscape around Almeida and leading to the bridge over the Coa, as well as the dispositions and movements of the forces involved.[93] The effects of sfumato can clearly be seen in the shading of the topographical detail. Similar styles can be seen in maps from other officers.[94] These maps took time and a great deal of skill to prepare, but provided an excellent view of the landscape features. A much rougher effect can be seen in the map of the Battle of Buçaco by Sturgeon and Westmacott of the Royal Staff Corps. This map shows a stylised landscape with the maximum information included.[95]

There is an important qualification to be made here. Although Wellington's officers had ranged far and wide, there were still parts of the area of operations that were unknown, in direct contrast to the historical view which maintains that, '… the British Army had occupied and extensively reconnoitred the whole theatre of these operations for eight months'.[96] Extensive reconnaissance had indeed taken place, but by the time of the French invasion in September orders were still being issued ahead of movement instructions to assess the practicability of roads and bridges for various units, especially the artillery and other wheeled transport. The instructions to retreat from the ridge of Buçaco are interspersed with assurances that the roads have been recently reconnoitred and found, '… fit for British artillery'.[97] The officers who reconnoitred the roads, such as Lieutenants Shanahan and Westmacott of the Royal Staff Corps, and Captain Scovell of the QMG Department, would be posted to conduct the columns in the right direction to avoid confusion. This indicates that even though Wellington had been on the Serra do Buçaco for several days, and indeed earlier identified it as a possible defensive position, the reconnaissance of the surrounding area was not as thorough as might be expected. The previous months' surveying and reconnoitring was not as comprehensive as is believed.

The French had ample opportunities to map Spain and Portugal in 1801, and again in 1807 and 1808. Indeed, a survey of the country had been undertaken by French topographical engineers during Junot's occupation.[98] When Junot's army was returned to France by the British Navy in 1808 following the Convention of Cintra, these documents had been placed in safe-keeping at the *Dépôt de Guerre*. Therefore some excellent maps and documents which covered Central and Southern Portugal were available to Massena in Paris when he was appointed to command the army. Despite this, Pelet, Massena's ADC, complained

92 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.32, Instructions given to the Officers of the Quartermaster-General's Department, Murray, Head-Quarters, 27 September 1810.

93 TNA, WO 78/5961, William Willumin, 'Action of Almeida, July 1810', 8 September 1810.

94 TNA, WO 78/5957, Captain Henry Sturgeon, 'Affair with the Rear Guard of French Army under Marshal Soult at Salamonde, 16 May 1809', 1809.

95 TNA, WO 78/5966 to WO 78/5969, Captain Henry Sturgeon and John Westmacott, 'Battle of Busaco', October 1810.

96 Ward, *Wellington's Headquarters*, p.111.

97 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.30–32, Murray, Circular, &c. Confidential.

98 António Pedro Vicente, *Le Génie Français Au Portugal Sous l'empire: Aspects de Son Activité à l'époque de l'invasion et de l'occupation de Ce Pays Par l'armée de Junot – 1807-1808* (Lisbon: Direcção do Serviço Histórico Militar, 1984).

continually about the poor quality of the maps available to him during the 1810 campaign. Furthermore, the lack of reconnaissance left the French with little current information. *Capitaine* Noël of the artillery mentions that he had trouble identifying where he was, even though he had copies of Lopéz and Mentelle's maps to guide him.[99]

The French army had, since before the Revolution, a branch of engineers called the *Ingénieurs-Géographes*, who were, '… entrusted with the task of sketching the country and drawing up memoranda upon military operations …'[100] Berthier, Napoleon's chief-of-staff, had originally served in this unit under the *ancien régime*, which makes the absence of reliable topographical information from the French army's preparations all the more surprising. Pelet, who had also served as an geographic engineer, was aware of the paucity of topographical information available to the French army.[101] Some French writers have blamed the '… the marquis d'Alorna and several other Portuguese officers attached …'[102] to Massena's headquarters for the poor quality of topographical information available to them before and during the invasion, yet there was clearly a source of information good enough to create relatively accurate itinerary maps for the invasion.

Use was not yet made of maps in a tactical sense. The commanders would be able to see most, if not all, of the battlefield, and would make their dispositions accordingly. Maps were used in what would now be termed operational planning. The movement of troops, destinations, locations for magazines and rendezvous would be arranged using the maps compiled from previous reconnaissance, or by the use of commercially available maps and itineraries. The maps and itineraries developed by the military forces showed what resources were available to the army, and how plentiful (or not) they were, for example, showing the numbers of billets available in a village. The itinerary for the routes from Celorico to Ponte de Murcella compiled by Wellington's staff shows the distance between locations, the number of houses along with how many men and horses can be accommodated, and notes including practicability for artillery.[103] These documents give any commander the information required to get the troops across the countryside, in the correct order and suitably billeted at each stop.

There were few metalled roads in Portugal, being limited to the *Estrada Nova* and the main routes between large cities. Any unmetalled roads would quickly turn into deep mud with a little rain and the feet of 50,000 men, thousands of horses, and several thousand wheels passing over them. Maps such as Jefferys and Lopéz make no distinction on their maps as to the suitability of roads for any type of transportation, or whether the roads were made or unsurfaced. Maps created by military reconnaissance would include this information for the commander using the map, and copies made for subordinates to follow a particular route. For example, a 'Map of the roads between Torres Vedras, Mafra and Cabeca De Montachique' shows those roads suitable for 'English Artillery' in red, those suitable for 'Portuguese Artillery' in pink, and those '… impracticable for either without previous repair

99 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.96. An 1808 English version of the Mentelle map can be seen at the West Sussex Record Office, Reference: PHA/5162.

100 Ward, *Wellington's Headquarters*, p.23.

101 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.3.

102 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.40.

103 TNA, WO 37/11/3, 'Particulars of Roads from Celorico to Ponte De Murcella', 1810.

…' in yellow.[104] This map has been 'traced', in other words a copy has been made from an original. In this way, the valuable original which had been compiled from several reports was kept safe, and multiple copies made for the commanders who required them.

Information about the practicability of roads for wheeled traffic was extremely important, especially where defiles and narrow paths were to be used. On several occasions, wagons and guns of the French Army became stuck in defiles, causing huge tailbacks, and requiring the offending vehicles to be dismantled and the roads widened. A French 6-pounder gun, at the smaller end of the artillery used during the Peninsular War, was two metres wide and over three metres long. If one adds the limber and four horses for each gun, the length increases to more than eight metres. French artillery batteries usually comprised six or eight guns and their associated, large, ammunition wagons. Over and above the wagons of the artillery units, the French army took an additional six hundred wagons into Portugal. The wagons and guns would be too wide to pass some places, requiring rock to be cut, or buildings and walls to be pulled down. Because of the delays this imposed on the wheeled vehicles, the infantry and cavalry would become dangerously separated from the artillery and supply trains. *Capitaine* Noël, commanding a battery of artillery, recorded,:

> There is no road, only a narrow rocky and dangerous path … there are only escarped ascents and descents … I am forced to send [men] forward armed with picks and shovels to open … the route. One soldier marches before them carrying an iron bar the same width as our wagons to indicate the extent that the passage must be widened'.[105]

The importance of accurate and clear maps was shown when the French *grand parc* took the wrong road as they left Pinhel. They wasted time heading in the wrong direction, and once the error had been discovered were forced to retrace their steps, ending the day only a few miles from where they began.[106]

The wagons and artillery suffered terribly from the condition of many of the roads, especially those which were rock-strewn.[107] If the surface was too bad, the wheels and carriages of the artillery would suffer sufficiently to make them useless for battle. Intelligence and adequate maps would have indicated which roads were suitable for artillery and heavy wagons to pass, resulting in less damage and faster progress. As Fririon mentions regarding the march to Viseu,

> On broad roads and in an open country, such a movement, executed in four days, would have astonished no one, but in Portugal it could not be so. The roads of this country are indeed difficult for the inhabitants' carts, and still more so for the cannon and the caissons … The result, from this rapid progress, unpredicted delays;

104 TNA, WO 37/11/4, 'Map of the Roads between Torres Vedras, Mafra and Cabeca De Montachique', 1810.

105 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.95.

106 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.180; Horward, *The Battle of Bussaco*, p.2. Although Horward states in his footnote that the information comes from Fririon, the pages indicated do not include a reference to the lost artillery and baggage.

107 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, pp.42–43.

> the caissons and broken carriages, damaged by bad roads, demanded repairs, so that Viseu could not be left until the 24th …[108]

However, possession of even the most accurate maps did not guarantee the uninterrupted movement of troops. Reading maps sometimes caused difficulties for those officers who were tired and harassed, and were expecting guides to show them the way. Dickson wrote of reaching Venda de Rijo on 20 September to find an, '… English division which by mistake had taken the Thomar road returning, and filing into that for Carril which branches off to the right …'.[109] Even in a friendly country, with local guides, moving armies was a difficult proposition.

108 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.43.
109 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.285, 20-21 September 1810.

3

Blowing Up Bridges

The French

Général de Brigade Foy wrote, 'The engineers are the soul of the attack and the nerve of the defence. On campaign, they were our best, our only staff officers'.[1] Furthermore, he wrote, 'Engineers raise permanent and temporary fortifications. They attack and defend places … Europe was littered with our redoubts and entrenchments ..'.[2] A fully professional Engineer Corps had been formed in France in 1795. The *Armée de Portugal* had contingents of engineers as well as artificers trained for their specialist work, and these were attached to each army corps. For example, VI Corps had a detachment of the 2nd company of s*apeurs* whose strength on the 15th September was 4 officers, 74 other ranks and 122 horses.[3] Overall, the French invaded Portugal with nearly 500 engineers on the army strength.[4] There were additional quasi-engineering units attached to the artillery, such as the *pontonniers* and *ouvriers*, which would undertake a substantial part of any work, supervised by engineer officers and men.[5]

Général de Division Joseph-Félix Lazowski was appointed as the commander of the engineers in the *Armée de Portugal* on 21 April 1810.[6] Chief of engineers in the II Corps was *Chef de Bataillon* Brully, in VI Corps *Chef de Bataillon* Couche, and in VIII *Colonel* Valazé. The engineers worked closely with the artillerymen, both being well educated in mathematics and other relevant subjects. However, at times, both arms required the same tools and equipment, and arguments broke out over who should have which tools. The *Armée de Portugal* also needed a siege train with which to attack the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo, La Concepción, and Almeida. This would require large calibre artillery as well as thousands of entrenching tools, gabions and other materiel. *Général de Division* Charles Étienne Ruty

1 Joachim Ambert, *Esquisses Historiques, Psychologiques et Critiques de l'Armée Française* (Bruxelles: Librairie Militaire de J.B. Petit, 1840), p.222.
2 Ambert, *Esquisses Historiques*, p.231.
3 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.65.
4 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.568–71.
5 Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, p.365.
6 C Mullié, *Biographie Des Célébrités Militaires Des Armées de Terre et de Mer de 1789 à 1850* (Paris: Poignavant, 1851), Vol.2, p.197.

had this command, and he worked closely with Ney's chief of engineers on the plan for the attack on Ciudad Rodrigo.[7]

The French engineers were most extensively employed during the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida. These were formal sieges, with trenches and parallels laid out in a scientific and methodical manner. The engineers and artillerymen would work together to produce a plan of the trenches which could not be enfiladed by the garrison, and well sited batteries of artillery to attack the weak points of the fortress. The artillery would attack the defenders' guns and attempt to destroy them, whilst the engineers dug saps towards the fortress to emplace other guns to batter the defences down. Ruty and *Chef de Bataillon* Couche, commander of engineers in VI Corps, surveyed the defences of Ciudad Rodrigo and planned the placement of the trenches and artillery batteries to most effectively attack the walls of the town.[8] At Almeida, *Général de Division* Jean Éblé, commander of Massena's artillery, and Lazowski worked together to identify the best avenue of attack, and lay out the trenches and batteries accordingly.[9] At Ciudad Rodrigo the French used over 2,000 gabions and 32,000 sandbags, most of which had to be made on-site. After the siege the French had only 10,000 sandbags left in their reserve for the attack on La Concepción and Almeida.[10] There was such a shortage of sandbags that Reynier was ordered to requisition canvas throughout the area under his corps' control.[11]

The engineer officers would supervise the trench digging although that work would be carried out by *ouvriers*, supplemented by infantrymen or labourers taken from the local population. *Ouvriers* were labour companies which provided experienced workers and artisans to oversee the less experienced conscripted labour. 87 men from the 12e and 16e Compagnies des Ouvriers of the artillery were employed at Ciudad Rodrigo, in addition to 91 auxiliary pioneers.[12] 373 men of the 2e and 4e battalions de sapeurs were employed, of whom, 'Ten officers and fifty sappers were killed or wounded; scarcely one remained who has not received a few bruises'.[13] The numbers involved in trench digging can be seen in an example from the siege of Almeida. Here, at the beginning of the siege a diversionary work was undertaken by 1,000 labourers and 30 sappers, under Engineer *Capitaine* Vincent, to distract the garrison, while the first parallel was opened by 2,500 labourers and 150 sappers elsewhere. Engineer officers Nempde, Bruley, and Morley directed the main works and *Général de Brigade* Simon was responsible for supporting them with three infantry battalions, in case the garrison sallied out to interfere with the works. By the following morning the parallel trench was dug to a sufficient depth to almost cover the workers.[14] Because of

7 Jacques Vital Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges Faits Ou Soutenus Par Les Français Dans La Peninsule, de 1807 à 1814* (Paris: Didot, 1837), Vol.3 p.219.

8 Donald D. Horward, *Napoleon and Iberia: The Twin Sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, 1810,* Napoleonic Library 27 (London: Greenhill Books, 1994), p.118.

9 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.339.

10 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.309, Pièces Justificatives No 22, État des consommations faites par l'artillerie pour le siége de Ciudad-Rodrigo, et de ce qui restait au parc, le 10 juillet, époque de la reddition de la place.

11 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, 1837, Vol.3, p.340.

12 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, 1837, Vol.3, p.265, État des Troupes Employées au Siége de Ciudad-Rodrigo, Artillerie, Équipage De Siége.

13 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, 1837, Vol.3, p.266, État des Troupes Employées au Siége de Ciudad-Rodrigo, Génie.

14 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.29.

the dangers of working in close proximity to the enemy, the conscripted labourers were paid extra for their work.

Simple items such as picks, shovels, and crowbars were in short supply in the French army. There were several thousand tools at Bayonne, but these were not moved to Ciudad Rodrigo in time for the siege. The engineers only had their own tools to hand, and were forced to obtain tools locally, by purchase or confiscation, for the labourers. They also obtained tools from the artillery.[15] The defenders would attempt to sally out from the fortress and capture or destroy the tools, bringing the works to a halt. During the sieges, those tools which were available quickly wore out because of the rocky nature of the ground into which the soldiers were forced to dig. The engineers also had to be water-managers, as the trenches around Ciudad Rodrigo were liable to flooding both from the rain and also from underground springs.[16] Without adequate drainage the trench sides were liable to collapse, exposing the labourers and siege artillery to cannon fire from the fortress.

In addition to the sieges, Massena's engineers were continuously employed repairing bridges and roads on the advance into Portugal, and during the retreat by blowing up bridges in the face of the oncoming enemy. They found work in front of the lines at Lisbon repairing mills and other machinery, as well as working on the boat-bridges intended to cross the Tagus. During the retreat from Santarém, Jones wrote that the French engineers employed the mine on the Ponte de Murcella laid by Burgoyne earlier in the year to destroy the bridge.[17] However, Noël wrote, '… The English had … blown up the main arch of the bridge … Our sappers had soon rebuilt it'.[18]

Relations between Lazowski of the engineers and Éblé of the artillery were not always smooth, and the lack of tools and equipment caused friction between them. Éblé wrote to Lazowski after the siege of Almeida complaining that a magazine of tools, including shovels and pickaxes, had been commandeered by the engineers, despite them purportedly belonging to the artillery. An officer of engineers had told Éblé that tools would only be handed over by order of Massena. Éblé wrote to Lazowski, 'I repeat to you, my dear General, I am ready to share my means with you, but I will not suffer them to be torn from me. If my claim seems unfounded to you, go ahead, I beg you, and get the prince to decide, but it seems to me that this step suits neither you nor me'.[19]

Directly after the sieges, the towns, once taken, needed to be put back into a defensible condition. The engineers would work to reconstruct the walls as quickly as possible. Immediately upon the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, '… its trenches were being filled and the breach repaired'.[20] This was more difficult with Almeida after the catastrophic explosion in the town, but the garrison left there had sufficient time to effect adequate repairs that by the time the allied army returned in March 1811, the town was again defensible.

15 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.223–24.

16 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.225–26; Horward, *Napoleon and Iberia*, pp.122–23.

17 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.97.

18 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.116.

19 Maurice Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé (1758-1812)* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1893), pp.183–84, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au général Lazowski, Almeida, 29 August 1810; SHD, 7C10, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance', 1810.

20 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.84.

Éblé, although the chief of artillery, was engaged throughout the campaign in what might be considered an engineering role, from the siege works at Ciudad Rodrigo to accumulating material both to make tools and to build the bridge at Santarém. Pontoon bridges or boat bridges were employed by both sides. Massena had the 44e Bataillon de Flotille on hand to help with this particular type of work. Éblé was provided with four companies of the 44e and one of *pontonniers* to build the bridge across the Tagus at Santarém.[21]

Massena also employed his engineers, as well as some artillery officers, upon reconnaissance in much the same way that Wellington did. Noël recalled, 'I was ordered, with an engineer officer, to reconnoitre [the Alemquer – Cartaxo – Santarém] route, which we found more or less suitable for artillery'.[22] In the latter part of the campaign they were involved in the construction of the defences at Santarém, however the French engineers were always short of materials and tools.[23] Houses were demolished to recover useful resources to construct tools, and to provide building material to assemble a bridge across the Tagus:

> General Éblé started by having the tools – axes, saws, etc. – made out of the iron obtained from demolished houses. He had trees cut down and used his tools to saw beams, cut planks, forge anchors and grappling hooks, and to plait ropes. Finally … he contrived to produce all that was needed for a bridge that could cross the Tagus.[24]

Général de Division Lazowski was charged with repairing the mills and ovens necessary for subsistence, and skilled workers such as locksmiths, carpenters and sawyers were called from the various corps for work at Santarém.[25] During the retreat from Santarém, the French destroyed bridges in their rear in the hope of slowing down the Allied advanced-guard. The bridge over the Ceira at Foz d'Arouce was repaired, crossed, and then blown up during the French retreat on 15 March 1811. When the bridge was reached by VI Corps, Ney had his engineers perform sufficient repairs to enable it to take the heavy wheeled transport and guns of the artillery, and once that was complete they then mined the bridge ready for its destruction.[26]

The Allies

Wellington's plan for the defence of Portugal relied upon several interconnecting factors, one of which was the delay he needed to impose on the advancing French army to allow attrition to work. Another was the planned 'scorched earth' to deny the French the resources they

21 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.237.
22 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.107.
23 SHD, 7C10, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance', Massena to Éblé, 18 October 1810.
24 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.109.
25 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.91.
26 Henri Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney, Duc d'Elchingen, Prince de La Moskowa* (Paris: Chapelot, 1914), Vol.3, pp.506–7; Emmanuel Frédéric Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs d'Emmanuel-Frédéric Sprünglin, Publiés Par G. Desdevises Du Dezert', *Revue Hispanique*, 1904, p.472.

would need to sustain their army in Portugal, which would amplify the first point. These two aspects of the strategy relied almost entirely, and ultimately, on another factor, which was the defensive works around Lisbon. Without those works, the rest of the strategy would not stop the French from capturing Lisbon.

Wellington employed his engineers continuously throughout the campaign of 1810-1811, notably in preparing various defensive works in front of the enemy advance, and also in destroying roads and bridges to delay them. The engineers were also employed in building small defensive works when necessary, such as several redoubts or fleches on the ridge at Buçaco. The officers of the Royal Engineers were, like the artillery, not under the command of the army, but under the Board of Ordnance. The hierarchy of command was more structured at home than in Portugal, where capable officers would be set to work drawing or reconnoitring regardless of their cap-badge. In much the same way that officers of the QMG Department and Royal Staff Corps were instructed to gather intelligence and survey the landscape as they passed, so the engineers were periodically employed in a similar manner, but with a slight twist regarding roads and bridges. Wellington sent instructions to Burgoyne via Murray to,

> … survey the course of the Cris, and to ascertain its course, by how many bridges and fords it is crossed, where the roads crossing it lead to, whether it fills in winter, and how long it remains full, and whether the destruction of the bridge between Mortagoa and Santa Combadao [sic], and the destruction of the road leading from the bridge on the right of the river, would be a serious impediment to the use of the road from Viseu to Coimbra by Mortagoa and Mealhada. Let him calculate the means of destroying that bridge and road. I should wish the same information regarding the Dão, which joins the Cris immediately below Santa Combadao [sic]. Also the same respecting the river about a league or a league and a half from Viseu.[27]

The number of engineers was small, and the best used had to be made of their skills. Although there were companies of Royal Military Artificers in Britain, they were not used to any significant extent in Portugal in 1810.[28] The lack of skilled artificers and sappers in the Allied army, and the limited training and knowledge displayed by some engineers, led Britain to found the School of Military Engineering at Chatham in 1812, intended to teach military field working and other skills to the engineers, sappers and miners.[29] The limited supply of experienced manpower was not the only problem, and Wellington suffered a similar shortage of tools to the French, writing to the Earl of Liverpool that, 'The service is suffering at present for want of the … intrenching [*sic*] tools'.[30]

27 George Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1873), Vol.1 p.66, Memorandum from Lord Wellington to reconnoitre some country between Viseu and Coimbra, given to Burgoyne by Colonel Murray, Quartermaster-General, 14 January 1810.

28 Mark S. Thompson, *Wellington's Engineers: Military Engineering in the Peninsular War 1808 – 1814* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2015), p.238.

29 Whitworth Porter, *History of the Corps of Royal Engineers* (Chatham: W & J Mackay Limited, 1977), Vol.1, p.311.

30 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.393, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Pero Negro, 3 November 1810.

The Portuguese *Real Corpo de Engenheiros* had been reorganised after the French had left Portugal following the Convention of Cintra, before Marshal Beresford took over. This unit of engineers, according to British sources, seem to have been underemployed during the construction of the Lines and the campaign of 1810. Actually, in addition to the British engineers involved in the construction of the defensive lines, the *Real Corpo de Engenheiros* contributed many officers to the works. Three are mentioned by name in a memorandum from Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher putting Captain Jones in, '… command and superintendence of all works and duties connected with the Engineer Department in this part of Portugal'.[31] They are *Tenente*s Lorenzo Homem, Sousa, and Britto. Later, Jones mentions four Portuguese engineer officers as being employed in the lines, along with eleven British and Two King's German Legion officers.[32] Sadly he does not record the name of the fourth Portuguese officer. Sepulveda records the service of the *Engenheiros* in volume five of his work, *Historia da Engenharia Militar Portuguesa*, and lists the officers recorded as having been employed on the Lines in 1810. Among them are *Tenente Coronel* José Vicente de Lacerda, *Major* Bernardo José Pereira dos Santos Franco and *2° Tenente* Manoel José Dias Cardozo, to name just a few. There are some 38 *Engenheiros* listed in this work, showing the contribution made by the Portuguese army which has not been recognised to its fullest extent in the histories of the campaign of 1810.[33] In 1808-1809 *Tenente* Torriani, for example, worked on defences at Coimbra and the bridge at Ponte de Murcella, reconnoitred the roads between Buçaco and the Mondego, served in the campaign to retake Oporto and was employed in the construction of the lines around Lisbon.[34] Other Portuguese engineers were involved in the repair work at Almeida in 1811 after the recapture of the fortress.

As part of the delaying tactics which Wellington was to employ, roads and bridges in the front of the French advance were to be destroyed, forcing the French to either repair the destruction, or find an alternative route. Portuguese engineers who spoke French were ordered to be made available to Fletcher, '… with a view to their being employed in the destruction of roads when it may be necessary'.[35] Fletcher expanded on his thoughts for destroying roads and bridges in a memorandum to Wellington, arguing that their destruction early in the campaign, especially those cut into the sides of rocky hills, would be expeditious, '… as far as they are known, before matters come to extremities, as at that moment, when so many objects will press imperiously for attention, it may be impossible to attend to others of minor importance'.[36] This may be the reason for the failure to destroy some bridges in the face of the French advance in the early stages of the invasion, notably at Juncais, which would have seriously impeded the initial French advance.

Burgoyne describes the problems associated with preparing the bridges at Ponte de Murcella and Val dos Pinos for destruction. He considered that the destruction of the bridge

31 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.19.

32 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.67.

33 Christovam Ayres de Magalhães Sepulveda, *Historia Organica e Politica Do Exercito Portuguez* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1910), Vol.5, pp.308–14.

34 Sepulveda, *Historia Organica e Politica Do Exercito Portuguez*, Vol.5, p.313.

35 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.736–37, Wellington to Marshal Beresford, Viseu, 18 February 1810.

36 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.469–72, Fletcher to Wellington, Torres Vedras, 11 January 1810.

at Ponte de Murcella would be of little consequence to the French movement, but that at Val dos Pinos would prove more problematic as it was in a deep ravine and the river not easily fordable nearby.[37] There was a shortage of skilled labour, and Burgoyne had to wait for four peasant labourers to arrive before he could begin work. The bridge at Ponte de Murcella was a tough nut to crack, as Burgoyne noted on 9 August: 'Finished opening the bridge for the powder at Ponte de Murcella at 10 A.M. Total, nine days nearly employed, the masonry being very hard to pierce from the top'.[38]

Frontier Fortresses

As part of his overall plans, Wellington was careful about preparing the major fortified towns on the borders of Portugal. The main fortresses of Almeida, Elvas, Abrantes, and Valença had been put into defensible condition, garrisoned and supplied in preparation for an invasion by whichever route the French chose.[39] Wellington wanted to ensure the towns were capable of being defended, both in terms of the fabric of the defences as well as the supplies and weaponry. The garrisoning of these towns had been put into motion in late 1809 by Beresford and Wellington, placing newly recruited units into garrison which would relieve troops that had the benefit of training to be placed into the regular formations of the field army.[40] Captain Patton had been sent to Abrantes to prepare the defences, and by order of Wellington was appointed to the council of defence with an effective veto on any surrender of the town. The town was garrisoned entirely by Portuguese troops, 'The only British in the place were the engineers …'.[41]

Several Portuguese engineers were sent to Almeida to prepare the town for the forthcoming campaign.[42] Almeida was crucial to the defence of the Portuguese frontier, and had been taken without a siege from the French after the Convention of Cintra. It was in, '… a respectable state of defence …',[43] but there was always room for improvement. The fort at La Concepción was located between Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and overlooked the crossing of the Tourões River. The French had abandoned it in 1808 and breached the walls in several places, making it indefensible. Orders were issued by Wellington in May to have the defences rebuilt and guns and ammunition to be sent from Almeida.[44] Captain Burgoyne of the Royal Engineers was appointed to oversee the repairs. The fortress was garrisoned by the Portuguese 9° Infantaria and four companies of the 1/45th Foot, which were part of Picton's 3rd Division. The 1/45th was kept at Val de la Mula, with instructions to go into the

37 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.97, 28 July 1810.
38 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.99, Foz d'Arouce, 9 August 1810.
39 See Appendix 1, Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, Commanding Royal Engineers, 20 October 1809.
40 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.443–44, Beresford to Wellington, Thomar, 16 December 1809.
41 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.6.
42 Sepulveda, *Historia Organica e Politica Do Exercito Portuguez*, Vol.5, pp.313–19.
43 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.81, Present State of the War in this Country.
44 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*,Vol.4, p.89, Memorandum for Brigadier General Cox, Governor of Almeida, for Fort Concepcion, Celorico, 27 May 1810.

fortress if an alarm was given.[45] Under Burgoyne's instruction, a few Spanish labourers and the Portuguese troops were set to work to finish the repairs already undertaken.

At the same time as repairs were being made to the fortress, Burgoyne was instructed to mine the place ready for destruction. Wellington was concerned that the French might be in greater strength than first thought, and knew that as La Concepción would probably fall quickly, its garrison would be lost. Accordingly, he instructed Burgoyne to have shafts dug and filled with explosives. The work was difficult as the mines and shafts were dug by inexperienced Portuguese troops, and the diggers were often buried as their excavations collapsed around them.[46] The fort was only blown up as the French advanced upon it on 21 July.

Planning and creation of the defensive lines around Lisbon

The best kept secret of the Peninsular War was no secret, at least to the allies. Some histories suggest that the works were undertaken in a clandestine manner, and, '… all but a few staff officers in the British army were … unaware of their construction'.[47] The French may have been surprised by the defences, but many in the allied camp knew of the works, with Ensign Aitchison writing in August 1810 of the fortified positions at Villa Franca and Torres Vedras.[48] In July, Dickson, in a letter to Major General John MacLeod, described how, if the army was obliged to fall back it would retreat to, '… a strong entrenched line between Torres Vedras and Villa Franca …'.[49] However, the true magnitude of the works, both in width and depth, and the overall planning which instigated their construction, remained known to only a handful of people. For those working on the defences, they would have been aware of the local fortifications, but not necessarily of the full extent of the defences. Some thought that they were a simple waste of resources, that the defences were not capable of stopping the French if they advanced in strength to Lisbon.[50]

Wellington identified the defence of Lisbon as crucial to the overall defence of Portugal, and therefore the Lines were planned to protect the city from attack by land, with the Royal Navy guaranteeing access by sea for reinforcements and supplies. Now known as the 'Lines of Torres Vedras' they were built following Wellington's assessment of the situation in Portugal, and the formation of his plan to defend the capital. The land around Lisbon forms a peninsula with the Tagus on one side and the sea on the other. This allows a line of fortifications to have secure flanks, removing the opportunity for the position to be turned and forcing the enemy into making a frontal assault if he wished to break through. The Lines to the north of Lisbon were complimented by other defences identified in various memoranda,

45 Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, Vol.1, p.76.

46 Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, Vol.1, p.85.

47 Norris and Bremner, *The Lines of Torres Vedras*, p.12; Nick Lipscombe, *Wellington's Guns: The Untold Story of Wellington and His Artillery in the Peninsula and at Waterloo* (Oxford: Osprey, 2013), p.139.

48 John Aitchison (ed. W.F.K. Thompson), *An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison* (London: Joseph, 1981), pp.108–9, Moimenta, 15 August 1810.

49 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.237, Dickson to MacLeod, Camp at Alpalhao, 16 July 1810.

50 Grehan, *The Lines of Torres Vedras*, pp.63–64; Thompson, *Wellington's Engineers*, pp.66–67.

such as the heights from Traffaria to Almada,[51] opposite Lisbon on the south bank of the Tagus.[52]

There is some debate about who first had the idea which developed into the defensive lines around Lisbon, although in most English language works the Portuguese influence is covered only briefly.[53] The dispute is about where the idea originated for the defensive lines. Wellington was intimately acquainted with the nature of the terrain around Lisbon, having crossed it first in 1808. The action at Vimiero prompted the retreat of the French army to Torres Vedras, and Wellington's troops marched from there to Sobral, along the route of the first line of defences built two years later.[54] The division under his command occupied ground around Sobral in August of 1808.[55] Before Wellington's memorandum of 1809 was sent to Fletcher, Burgoyne recalls differences of opinion about the defences for Lisbon, writing in his journal in April 1809, 'Went over the river [Tagus] to the position for securing Lisbon from bombardment on that side, and heard a Portuguese colonel of engineers utter many absurdities'.[56] In a letter sent to the Duke of Richmond in April 1809 is, perhaps, the seed of the plan for the defences around Lisbon. Wellesley (as he was then) wrote, '… I have long determined to fortify the heights of Almada, so as to be able to hold them with a small body of men, as the first step I should take upon my arrival'.[57] The basic plan for defending the approaches to Lisbon by the use of earthworks and minimal manpower would be central to the lines built to the north of the capital. As early as May 1809 Wellington had, '…sent to Lisbon two officers of engineers with orders respecting the defence of Lisbon …'.[58]

Portuguese historians take the view that there is historical precedent for the use of fortifications for the defence of Lisbon,[59] with the commander of the *Real Corpo de Engenheiros*, José de Moraes Antas Machado, writing to Dom Miguel Pereira Forjaz in early 1809 with plans to fortify the approaches to the city.[60] This is reinforced with a memorandum by Lourenço Homem da Cunha de Eça entitled 'Report on the defensive line to cover Lisbon' submitted on 20 March 1809.[61] Portuguese historians favour the idea that *Major* Neves Costa first proposed the idea to Wellington. Neves Costa had worked with the French engineer *Colonel*

51 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.186, Wellesley to the Duke of Richmond, Portsmouth, 14 April 1809.

52 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.793–95, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Viseu, 23 March 1810.

53 Thompson, *Wellington's Engineers*, p.58; Robert W. Bremner, 'The Building and Manning of the Lines of Torres Vedras' in Alice D. Berkeley (ed.), *New Lights on the Peninsular War: Selected Papers 1780 – 1840, the Calouste Gulbenkian Center, Lisbon, Portugal, 24th – 26th July, 1989* (Lisboa: British Historical Society of Portugal, 1991), p.112; Grehan, *The Lines of Torres Vedras*, pp.34–35.

54 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.99, Plan for the operations of the Army, Ramalhal, 26 August 1808.

55 TNA, MPH 1/152/3, 'Sketch of a Piece of Ground in the Neighbourhood of Sombral [Sic] de Monte Grace Occupied by Sir Arthur Wellesley's Division of the Army on the 31st August 1808', 1808.

56 Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, Vol.1, p.35, 4 April 1809.

57 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.185–86, Wellesley to the Duke of Richmond, Portsmouth, 14 April 1809.

58 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.219, Wellington to the Villiers, Coimbra, 7 May 1809.

59 Simão José Da Luz Soriano, *Historia Da Guerra Civil E Do Estabelecimento Do Governo Parlamentar Em Portugal*, Vol.V Parte II, Segunda Epocha (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1893), pp.522–23; Claudio de Chaby, *Excerptos Historicos E Collecção De Documentos Relativos Á Guerra Denominada Da Peninsula* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1871), Vol.3, p.209.

60 Soriano, *Historia Da Guerra Civil*, Vol.V Parte II, p.67.

61 Soriano, *Historia Da Guerra Civil*, Vol.V Parte II, pp.5–10, Memoria sobre a linha defensiva que deve cobrir Lisboa: Pelo major de engenheiros e lente da antiga academia de fortificação, Lourenço Homem da Cunha de Eça.

Vincent during Junot's occupation of Portugal in 1807-1808, and Vincent prepared a report of the defence of Lisbon which certainly found its way into Wellington's hands.[62] Maps exist in The National Archives in London showing some of these plans.[63] According to a recent work, Neves Costa presented the plans and memorandum to Beresford[64] who passed them on to Wellington who, '… recognised their worth and ordered them to survey the terrain and to compile a practical plan for the defence of Lisbon'.[65] Neves Costa published his view of the situation in 1822 which identified the origins of the defensive works around Lisbon to have been from the Portuguese engineers.[66] Indeed there is some correlation between those positions suggested by Neves Costa and the redoubts built in 1809-1810, but the topography limits the choice of places to build defensive positions to protect the approaches to the city.

According to Wellington, he had never seen or met Neves Costa. He wrote to Dom Miguel Forjaz protesting against the idea that Neves Costa and *Coronel* Caula should receive a reward for forming the idea of the defences. Wellington's recollection was that in 1809 Forjaz gave him a plan of the country and a memorandum by Neves Costa, but,

> It has never been my practice to refrain from giving applause to those officers under my command to whom applause is due, or to omit to recommend them to the notice and generosity of their superiors and their sovereign; but I solemnly protest against its being understood that Major Das Neves, or Col. Caula, either formed the plan, or conceived the idea of the system which was carried into execution for the safety of Lisbon under my direction. I never saw Major Das Neves in my life, nor Col. Caula, till I saw him at Almeida. Your Excellency gave me in 1809 a plan of the country in question, and a memoir by Major Das Neves; I am now obliged to declare, that when I came to examine the ground, I found both so inaccurate, that I could place no reliance upon them; and it is a fact, that having trusted in one instance to the plan and memoir, without reconnaitring [sic] the ground, I was obliged to make a second journey to Lisbon, in Feb. 1810, and to destroy the works which had been commenced.[67]

Wellington was referring to the works at Castanheira which were filled in after his reconnaissance in early February.[68] This may be an unfair criticism of Neves Costa's plans, as Robert Bremner points out, in one area, '… there are no less than eight places with names beginning with 'C' … One cannot help wondering if Wellington was somehow misled …'[69]

62 2nd Duke of Wellington, *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.145, Colonel Vincent's Report upon the Defence of Portugal, enclosure to letter from George Murray to Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Wellesley.

63 TNA, MPH 1/152/5, Joaquim de Oliveira, 'Planta Da Linha de Defeza de Lisboa', 1809.

64 José Maria des Neves Costa, 'Memória Militar, Respectiva Ao Terreno Ao Norte de Lisboa' (Lisboa, 1808).

65 Corrêa et al., *The Lines of Torres Vedras*, p.112.

66 José Maria des Neves Costa, *Exposição Dos Factos Pelos Quais Se Mostra Ter Sido Portuguesa a Iniciativa Do Projecto Proposto Em Geral Para Defesa de Lisboa Que Precedeu e Continha as Bases Do Projecto Particular Posto Depois Em Prática No Ano de 1810* (Lisboa: Imprensa Liberal, 1822).

67 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches,* Vol.5, p.609, Wellington to Forjaz, Alfaiates, 24 April 1812.

68 Anon. (ed.), *Papers on Subjects Connected with the Duties of the Corps of Royal Engineers* (London: John Weale, 1839), Vol.3, p.67.

69 Berkeley (ed.), *New Lights on the Peninsular War*, p.113.

This seems to be less likely when the extensive correspondence between Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher and Wellington between December 1809 and January 1810 is considered.[70] There was also a considerable amount of surveying and map making undertaken to identify and fix villages and significant features of land, as requested in Wellington's memorandum to Fletcher in point 19.[71] One may conclude that the probability of a place name or location being misinterpreted was likely to be small.

There is no clear way to show whether Neves Costa's work influenced Wellington's memorandum to Fletcher or not. It is likely that a competent military commander or engineer, faced with the task of protecting Lisbon by defensive works, would choose the prominent points for their main defensive positions. What is clear is that Wellington had several sources of information of varying quality. Neves Costa's and Vincent's works were available to Wellington, and likely informed part of the plan to build the defences around Lisbon. In addition, he had formulated the strategy to defend Portugal which required a final defence of Lisbon, and the two would be put together in the coming campaign. Portuguese historians are clear that Neves Costa was not responsible for the overall plan, but did contribute to the plans for the defences around the capital.[72]

Wellington's system relied upon not just the fortifications, but upon the main field army being positioned behind the main defensive line, with the facility to move to any threatened point, providing the enemy with the task of not simply overcoming the fortifications, but fighting a battle as well. The significance of the defensive works in Wellington's plans were demonstrated when Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher was given responsibility for acquiring men and materials without waiting for Commissariat approval, or indeed orders from Wellington.[73] Considering the scale of the works being undertaken, this was a great responsibility indeed.

The defences at Lisbon were not a continuous line of earthworks, but were separate defensive positions, some mutually supporting. They were protected by abatis, flooding, and scarping, which acted to stop the advance of the enemy. There were three lines, with each fortification built to suit the particular location chosen for it, and so there is a wide variation in sizes and shapes along the lines. The first line of fortifications runs along a prominent scarp from Alhandra on the Tagus to south of the mouth of the River Zizandre on the Atlantic coast. The second line begins around Alverca on the Tagus and ends to the south of Ericiera. The third and final line surrounds the port at São Julião, between Belem and Cascaes on the southern tip of the peninsula. This last line was to protect the embarkation of the army in the event of a defeat, allowing all of the British, and some Portuguese, to be taken off.[74] A fourth set of defences was built later on the left bank of the Tagus at Almada, overlooking the harbour and estuary of the river, but this was not completed until after the northern defences were finished.

70 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.451, 458–62, 472, 473, 474.

71 See, for example, TNA, WO 37/11/15, 'Rough Sketch of Country and Names of Places Seen from the Upper Mill at Caxarias', 1810.

72 Sepulveda, *Historia Organica e Politica Do Exercito Portuguez*, Vol.5, p.297.

73 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.735, Wellington to Murray, Viseu, 18 February 1810.

74 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.773–76, Wellington to Stuart, Viseu, 10 March 1810.

The first two lines of forts were intended to defend the main approaches to Lisbon, through Torres Vedras, Sobral, and Alhandra, across the ranges of hills that stretch over the peninsula to the north of the capital. Each fort was intended to be self-sustaining, but many were built close together to provide mutual support. Jones wrote the, '… redoubts were perfectly independent of each other, and were made of a strength of profile to resist an assault, and placed on points where artillery could with great difficulty be brought to cannonade them'.[75] Some areas did not need defences, being impassable to horses or wagons. Other places did not have active defences, but were flooded or covered with abatis to prevent movement. Many of the forts were built around, or incorporated, windmills which in this area were usually stone-built and sturdy.[76] As the defences took shape, the local peasants were denied these vital pieces of equipment, but some were better able to cope with the disruption than others. The Marquesa de Abrantes wrote complaining of the proposed construction of trenches which would result in the destruction of her salt pans at Via Longa, and alternatives were employed which obviated the need for their destruction.[77] There was reparation for those whose livelihoods had been interrupted. Jones wrote,

> Compensation was made to the proprietors for the olive-trees cut down ; also for trees felled in private woods, and for crops destroyed before the advance of the invaders. The owners of mills dismantled in consequence of being on knolls selected for the site of works had a monthly payment equivalent to their previous average gains, and also a sum of money for the restoration of the machinery ; but otherwise, the principal injury sustained by private property being inflicted when the lines became the seat of war, the loss fell on individuals.[78]

The defences covered the main approaches to Lisbon via the roads at Torres Vedras, Sobral and Alhandra. Each fort or redoubt was designed to fit the peculiarities of the landscape in which it was built, so that no two forts were the same shape or size. Wellington instructed Fletcher on the size of garrison that the major forts should contain, but it was up to Fletcher and his engineers to design and lay out the final works. The first line of forts was initially constructed as a series of advanced works to blunt a French attack, with the second line originally forming the main defences. However, as the engineers had more time than expected, extra fortifications were added along the Sobral–Torres Vedras line, and these then formed the first line of defence. The forts were to be occupied by Portuguese militia and *Ordenança* with only a small allotment of regular troops, with the remaining allied forces formed up behind the first defensive line ready to concentrate at any threatened point. On the approach of the enemy, the forces could concentrate behind the threatened sector, and be ready to repulse any breakthrough. This gave Wellington the greatest amount of flexibility. The roads behind the defences were improved so that lateral movement between fortifications was easier for the allied troops, and roads in front of the defences were destroyed, reducing the mobility of the French.

75 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.46.
76 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, pp.71–72.
77 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.247, Jones to Fletcher, Lisbon, 5 September 1810.
78 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.90.

Jones was very complimentary of the Portuguese officers, NCOs and labourers employed on the works around Lisbon. He wrote

> … during a twelvemonth of this forced labour, not a single instance of insubordination or riot occurred, and the great quantity of work performed should, in justice to the Portuguese, be more ascribed to regular habits of persevering labour in those employed, than to the efficiency of the control exercised over them.[79]

The defences also had to be capable of protecting Lisbon from an advance along the southern bank of the Tagus, via Badajoz and Elvas, approaching the capital from the east, via the Alentejo. This would necessitate a crossing of the river between Abrantes and Salvaterra, but as Wellington noted in his memorandum to Fletcher in October 1809:

> In the winter season the river Tagus will be full, and will be a barrier to the enemy's enterprises with his left attack, not very difficult to be secured. In the summer season, however, the Tagus being fordable in many places between Abrantes and Salvaterra, and even lower than Salvaterra, care must be taken that the enemy does not, by his attack directed from the south of the Tagus, and by the passage of that river, cut off from Lisbon the British army engaged in operations to the northward of the Tagus.[80]

Partly as a result of this threat, Wellington ensured the defensive positions, or, '… scene of operations …'[81] for the final defence of Lisbon would be above this point. The Royal Navy would have gunboats posted in this part of the Tagus to prevent any attempt by the French to cross the Tagus. By this means, Wellington was limiting any options the French had to force the occupation of Lisbon to the smallest defensible area to hold his army, whilst retaining defended flanks and the possession of the capital. However, there would be a threat to shipping entering and leaving the mouth of the Tagus if the French occupied the left bank of the Tagus at the heights at Almada. This location on the southern side of the Tagus estuary could be reached along the road from Elvas. There was no way of crossing the estuary to reach Lisbon at this place other than by boat, or a boat bridge, which the French army could not do in the face of the Royal Navy. They could, however, make the harbour a dangerous spot to be by placing artillery on the heights at Almada and bringing the port under fire. Initially Wellington believed a French occupation of these heights would not inconvenience either Lisbon or the Navy,[82] but a later assessment lead to the fortification of these heights to protect the capital and its harbour as well as access to the lower Tagus.[83] Dickson records engineers going to Almada as late as December 1810 to improve the defences on the south

79 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.68.

80 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.557, Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, commanding Royal Engineers, Lisbon, 20 October 1809.

81 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.563, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Lisbon, 26 October 1809.

82 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.770, Wellington to Charles Stuart, Viseu, 8 March 1810.

83 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.793, Wellington to Berkeley, Viseu, 23 March 1810.

side of the estuary.[84] These defences are not shown in Faden's map of the country around Lisbon, which was published at the same time, but which does show the defences which comprised the Lines to the north of Lisbon.[85] Had Soult been persuaded to cooperate with Massena in September, and moved his army into Portugal and occupied this region, the resupply of Lisbon and the Allied army by the Royal Navy might have been made a more difficult enterprise than it was.

Over all, Wellington would prepare the defensible parts of Portugal to the best of his engineers' abilities. Wherever fortification would pay dividends, there a redoubt would be built; existing fortifications were strengthened and prepared. Local buildings were incorporated into the defences, and where defences could not be erected, rivers would be dammed, roads would be destroyed and paths blocked, and militia and *Ordenança* stationed nearby to harass any enemy trying to clear their way. Wellington had refused to defend the open frontier of Portugal, instead allowing the natural topology to funnel the advancing French army into known routes, all ending in front of the defences around Lisbon.

84 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.308, Letter to Major General MacLeod, Quinta de Santa Martha, 5 December 1810.

85 Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, cc-284-a, 'A Military Sketch of the Country Between Lisbon and Vimeiro Occupied by the British Army Under the Command of Lieutenant General Viscount Wellington: Published with Permission of the Quarter Master General by W. Faden Geographer to His Majesty & to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales' (London: Faden, 1810).

4

I Want to Enter Lisbon as Soon as Possible

Objective

The objective of the invasion in 1810 was the military subjugation of Portugal, the occupation of Lisbon, and enforcement of the Continental System. Napoleon wrote to his brother that now was a good time for peace, and that Britain would lose more than she would gain by continuing the war.[1] To force the peace, Napoleon intended to throw out the British and impose a new government on Portugal. To conquer Portugal, France needed to concentrate an army sufficiently strong to defeat the allied army there, as well as to occupy the important cities and fortresses. It needed to accumulate sufficient supplies to support the army in a country which was limited in its capacity to provide food and other essential supplies.

After the abortive invasion and occupation of Porto in 1809, Napoleon had written to Soult about how dissatisfied he was with his Marshal's operation, stating that, 'I want to enter Lisbon as soon as possible'.[2] All efforts were to be aimed at this objective. In the mind of Napoleon, the major obstacle to the occupation of Portugal was the British army. If the lacklustre performance of British arms in the Walcheren expedition was repeated in Portugal, the campaign would appear to be a race to see who could reach Lisbon first. At the beginning of 1810, Napoleon wrote, 'There is nothing dangerous in Spain but the English; the rest cannot stand in the field'.[3] He dismissed the Portuguese army, as Massena was to do, despite its reinvigoration under Marshal Beresford. As late as September 1810 Napoleon wrote to Massena telling him that Wellington only had 15,000 infantry, and for this force to balance 60,000 Frenchmen was ridiculous.[4]

Originally, Napoleon intended to take an army of 100,000 troops, including the Imperial Guard, into Portugal himself, but he was careful to avoid sending any of the veteran troops

1 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, pp.275–76, 16352, A Louis Napoléon, Roi de Hollande, a Amsterdam, Paris, 20 March 1810.

2 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.19, pp.527–28, 15871, Au Maréchal Soult, Duc de Dalmatie, Commandant l'Armée De Portugal, a Plasencia, Schoenbrunn, 26 September 1809.

3 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.168, 16192, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Paris, 31 January 1810.

4 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.21, p.130, 16928, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Saint-Cloud, 19 September 1810.

of the *Grande Armée* from Germany.[5] From October 1809 Napoleon sent a series of letters to *Général de Division* Clarke, Minister of War, to arrange for the formation of brigades and divisions to be sent to Spain.[6] Eventually, Napoleon decided to send Massena to lead the *Armée de Portugal*. Few of the Marshals of France were adept at independent command, and those that Napoleon thought capable, like Soult and Victor, had already been embarrassed in Spain and Portugal by Wellington. Massena, one of Napoleon's most experienced Marshals, was appointed commander of the *Armée de Portugal* by Imperial Decree on 17 April 1810.[7] Originally promised 70,000 men by Napoleon, with support from another 13,000 under *Général de Division* Kellermann, and 20,000 in Valladolid under *Général de Division* Drouet, Massena would eventually find himself with considerably fewer men, and insufficient means to complete the job.[8]

Massena's Plan

The overarching plan for the invasion of Portugal was Napoleon's, handed down to Massena by letter. Napoleon instructed Massena that the objectives of the invasion were the expulsion of the Anglo-Portuguese army and the occupation of Lisbon.[9] Napoleon wrote several times of marching on Lisbon, without any apparent understanding of the difficulties present in simply moving an army in that country. Pelet, Massena's aide-de-camp, wrote, 'In this case Lisbon was everything'.[10] By reaching Lisbon and occupying the city, the French would force the embarkation of at the least the British forces, and possibly the Portuguese army as well. The possibility of British goods being imported through the port would be removed, and the Continental System could be allowed to do its work.

Napoleon adopted a simplistic strategy and forced this upon Massena through a series of orders: Massena was to besiege and occupy Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and wait for the harvest. Then he was to methodically march on Lisbon, engaging the enemy if the opportunity arose.[11] The plan was simple, and lacked any of the expected Napoleonic subtlety. Massena planned to march from Almeida to Coimbra via Viseu, and then proceed down the main metalled road to Lisbon. The army would initially advance along two separate routes, meeting near Coimbra.

5 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.19, pp.554–55, 15909, Au Général Clarke, Comte d'Hunebourg, Ministre de la Guerre, Schœnbrunn, 7 October 1809.

6 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, pp.80 – 105. For example,558, 559, 563, 568, 589, 590.

7 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.116, 606, Imperial Decree, Compiègne, 17 April 1810.

8 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.0, pp.385–87, 16519, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Le Havre, 29 May 1810.

9 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, pp.552–53, For example, 16732, Au Maréchal Masséna, Prince d'Essling, Commandant l'Armée de Portugal, a Ciudad Rodrigo, Paris, 29 July 1810.

10 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.140.

11 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, 1866, Vol.20, pp.385–87, 16519, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Le Havre, 29 May 1810, and 16732, Berthier to Marshal Massena at Ciudad Rodrigo, Paris 29 July 1810.

Napoleon provided detailed guidance for Massena on how to conduct the campaign, yet he wrote, 'I am too far away, and the position of the enemy changes too often, for me to give advice on how to carry out the attack …'.[12] With this apparent contradiction, Massena was in a constant dilemma over his freedom of action. He may have wanted to mask the fortresses and march on Lisbon, as Ney and others suggested, but was unable to adopt a different approach from the one given to him by his Emperor. Massena was told he would also have Drouet and his IX Corps, plus some additional troops, to maintain his line of communications during the march on Lisbon, but it was not until December that Drouet would actively operate to support Massena.[13]

The French had options for attacking on both sides of the Tagus, pinning down Wellington's forces in the north while moving on Lisbon further south. After the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo Napoleon wrote to Massena that he believed Almeida would fall by the end of August, allowing the *Armée de Portugal* to march on Lisbon from the beginning of September. Badajoz and Elvas should be ignored for the moment, as once the Allies were beaten and the British had embarked, the fortresses would fall. This missed the opportunity of splitting Wellington's forces by a two-pronged attack into Portugal, which may have forced the British to embark their forces and leave Portugal entirely. However, this plan needed the support of additional army corps, and the cooperation of other marshals and generals, to distract and fix other parts of Wellington's army. Cooperation was a commodity almost entirely lacking between the different commanders in the Peninsula, and was to be one reason for Massena's undoing. Moreover, the limitations of French power, which reached only as far as a musket shot or cannon shot from where French soldiers were, meant that it would be difficult to collect and maintain sufficient troops to overwhelm the enemy, regardless of the differences between the marshals.[14] The restriction of influence to the ground occupied by the French was a continual problem throughout the campaign, and the war in Spain and Portugal as a whole.

The Army

Massena was reluctant to take up command, claiming that advanced age and infirmity made it impossible for him to campaign again. He suffered from a lung ailment contracted during earlier campaigning and had lost an eye to Napoleon during a hunt.[15] According to Hulot, on reaching the army Massena said, 'I am here, in spite of myself, for I am too old and too sickly to serve again; the Emperor so wishes, and answers my reasons for refusal, that my reputation will suffice. It is flattering, no doubt, but we do not live twice in our

12 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, 1866, Vol.21, p.130, 16928, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Saint-Cloud, 19 September 1810.

13 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.552, 16732, Au Maréchal Masséna, Prince d'Essling, Commandant l'Armée de Portugal, a Ciudad Rodrigo, Paris, 29 July 1810.

14 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.138.

15 Richard Humble, *Napoleon's Peninsular Marshals* (London: Macdonald & Jane's, 1973), p.125; James Marshall-Cornwall, *Marshal Massena* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.152.

profession …'.[16] Foy observed that he was, '… no longer the Massena with the sparkling eye …'.[17] Bonnal commented, '… Massena, at the moment when he received the command of the army of Portugal, was no more than the shadow of Massena of Zurich and Genoa …'.[18] However, only the year before he had successfully commanded a corps during the Wagram campaign, and since then had benefitted from six months' rest in France.

Napoleon told Massena he was to have an army of, '40,000 infantrymen and 9,000 to 10,000 cavalrymen, independent of artillery troops, sappers, and the like, which will make … an army of 50,000 men …'.[19] The initial strength of Massena's forces did not approach the 100,000 Napoleon had originally thought necessary for his own invasion, and were not enough for the operation as undertaken in 1810. He did not consider the Portuguese army a threat, and estimated the British to have only 24,000 men in total in Portugal. This underestimate meant that the numbers provided for the *Armée de Portugal* were substantially fewer than would be required, especially after garrisoning the towns of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida was taken into account.

The French army had been generally victorious in Europe in the preceding years, but success had been more difficult in Spain and Portugal, and the *Armée de Portugal* of 1810 was not the *Grande Armée* of 1805, although some of the troops in the army had served in the camps at Boulogne and in the following victorious campaigns. Even though some of the formations had been in the field for several years, many of the soldiers were replacements or recently conscripted. They did not have the opportunity, as in 1805, to train together in large formations, with a single coherent command structure directing their operations. Instead, the forces were spread over large areas for the purpose of simple subsistence, occasionally fighting irregular forces.

The French *Armée de Portugal* comprised three corps: II Corps under *Général de Division* Reynier, VI Corps commanded by Marshal Ney, and the VIII Corps under *Général de Division* Junot. II Corps, '… consisted of excellent troops, having received no conscripts for more than two years'.[20] There were in excess of 16,000 troops with 18 guns. Many of Reynier's troops had fought in the earlier invasion of Portugal and Soult's occupation of Oporto so they had already experienced war against the British and more particularly against Wellington.[21] Reynier himself had fought with Massena in Italy, and had been present at the Battle of Wagram in 1809, before being appointed to the command of II Corps.

VI Corps comprised over 27,000 men, with 30 pieces of artillery, and composed mostly of experienced troops who for several years had fought under Marshal Ney. The 1er and 2e Divisions were veteran formations. However Ney had received 6,000 reinforcements under *Général de Division* Loison, many of whom were either foreign troops such as the Légion Hanovrienne, raised from German troops, or the Légion du Midi which had been raised

16 Jacques Louis Hulot, *Souvenirs Militaires Du Baron Hulot, Général d'Artillerie, 1773-1843* (Paris: Spectateur Militaire, 1886), p.303.

17 Maurice Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy* (Paris: E Plon, 1900), p.100.

18 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney,* Vol.3, p.317.

19 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, pp.385–87, 16519, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Le Havre, 29 May 1810.

20 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.25.

21 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.23.

in the annexed departments of northern Italy.[22] Some battalions had only been formed as recently as 1809, and sent directly to Spain, consisting of raw conscripts. Ney was one of Napoleon's finest battlefield commanders, and was usually to be found in the thick of the fighting. His command of VI Corps since 1804 had earned him the loyalty of the troops, and he was to fight doggedly as the commander of the rear-guard during the retreat from Santarém. In preparation for the forthcoming sieges, Ney had assembled, 'A battalion of 300 *chasseurs du siège*, composed of three companies of 100 men, selected from among the best marksmen in the infantry regiments …'.[23] These elite troops were intended to pick off the gunners inside the fortresses, and to keep the defenders' heads down. Such units could be formed for specialist operations, and then disbanded once the operation was complete.

The VIII Corps was made up of a large number of conscripts, and filled out with other foreign troops such as the Légion Irlandaise and Régiment de Prusse. These units, although ostensibly Irish or Prussian in origin, contained a variety or nationalities, including prisoners of war and deserters from Wellington's army.[24] Pelet described Junot's command as being, '… made up almost entirely of new or foreign regiments and one third of the infantry in the fourth battalions had been formed up very recently'.[25] These troops had been collected from various depots in France and had seen little fighting, except for a minor action at Astorga.[26] The units of the 1er Division under Clausel were inexperienced 4e battalions of regiments, apart from the 3e Brigade which consisted of 4 battalions of the 22e Ligne alone.[27] The infantry unit sizes varied from the smallest, a single battalion of the 32e Légère at 361 men, to 2,585 men of the four battalions of the 65e Ligne. VIII Corps' commander, Junot, was somewhat unpredictable, but courageous in battle. He would be wounded in the face whilst on reconnaissance during the retreat to Santarém, and it is thought that this led to his eventual mental breakdown.[28] He met his end by jumping from a window in 1813.

In 1808 Napoleon issued a decree reorganising the establishment of infantry regiments and battalions, changing the battalion from nine companies to six, and setting the overall establishment of a regiment to five battalions, with a strength of 3,970 men, including officers.[29] The limit of five battalions was sometimes exceeded, as the army lists indicate. Some units fielded their 6e battalions, as in the case of the 26e Ligne of the 1er Brigade of the 3e Division in VI Corps, which was composed of the 4e, 5e, and 6e battalions.[30] The number of inexperienced troops was reflected in officer and NCO casualties during combat. The French army suffered heavy officer casualties in the fighting because of the habit of the

22 Digby George Smith, *Napoleon's Regiments: Battle Histories of the Regiments of the French Army, 1792-1815* (London: Greenhill Books, 2000), pp.219–20.

23 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.315.

24 Ernest Picard and Louis Tuetey, (eds.), *Unpublished Correspondence of Napoleon I Preserved in the War Archives*, trans. Louise Seymour Houghton, (New York: Duffield and Company, 1913), Vol.3 p.790; Smith, *Napoleon's Regiments*, pp.218–19.

25 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.23.

26 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.27.

27 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.520–21.

28 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.108.

29 Plon and Dumaine, (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.16 p.38, Composition de l'infanterie de Ligne et Légère, Decree, Palais des Tuileries, 18 February 1808.

30 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.64, État de situation des troupes au 15 Septembre 1810.

officers encouraging their often-inexperienced troops, urging them on. Simmons recalled the fighting at Almeida: 'French officers like mountebanks running forward and placing their hats upon their swords, and capering about like madmen …'.[31]

Most of the cavalry were experienced troops under veteran officers such as Montbrun and Sainte-Croix. A small number of the dragoons in the *Armée de Portugal* had fought at Talavera under Latour-Mauborg. The 3e and 4e squadrons of dragoon regiments were stripped from Latour-Mauborg's division and formed into three provisional regiments which were then transferred into the cavalry brigade of the VIII Corps.[32] The creation of provisional regiments did nothing to improve the morale of troops who had suffered a defeat, and were now expected to serve with unfamiliar units in an unfamiliar organisation. Napoleon correctly predicted that Wellington, lacking in cavalry compared to the French, would not attempt a major battle in the plains of the Spanish/Portuguese border, but instead fight a battle where cavalry would be at the greatest disadvantage.[33] Wellington had only 3,000 cavalry in the Allied army, compared to over 11,000 in the *Armée de Portugal*. Wellington wrote about relieving Ciudad Rodrigo that, '… the enemy being ... superior in cavalry, I think I ought not risk a general action in the plains to relieve the place'.[34]

The artillery was commanded by *Général de Division* Éblé, and consisted of batteries attached to the divisions of the army. For example, *Capitaine* Noël commanded the artillery for the 1er Division of VIII Corps, comprising the 11e compagnie of the 8e Artillerie à Pied, and the 8e compagnie of the 6e Artillerie a Cheval, totalling some 6 officers, 296 men with 333 horses.[35] All of the ammunition and equipment for the artillery was carried in caissons, or wagons, and Éblé suggested that the army take 36 caissons of 12 pound, 40 caissons of 8 pound, and 40 caissons of 4 pound ammunition into Portugal.[36] This information provides us with some idea of the types and sizes of guns taken into Portugal, and also the ratio of sizes. Éblé also required 3 forges, 8 other caissons and 12 spares, along with 125 wagons for the infantry ammunition. Thus, 264 wagons, each pulled by at least four horses, would have followed the guns of the reserve artillery parc. Apart from the sieges, the artillery of the *Armée de Portugal* played almost no role in the first half of the campaign, being ineffective at Buçaco, and almost useless in front of the defences at Lisbon. Some of the batteries came into their own during the retreat from Santarém, as part of the rear-guard.

Intelligence and Communications

As the French had invaded Portugal twice in the last three years, the amount of information available to Massena should have been extensive, but instead has been portrayed

31 George Simmons (ed. Willoughby Verner), *A British Rifle Man* (London: A & C Black, 1899), p.77.

32 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.120, 16132, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Paris, 11 January 1810.

33 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.383, 16519, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Le Havre, 29 May 1810.

34 Gurwood, *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.114–15, Wellington to Henry Wellesley, Celorico 11 June.

35 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.94; Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.68.

36 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.176–77, Le général Eblé au duc de Feltre, 11 June 1810.

as limited and unreliable. Pelet complained bitterly about the lack of maps,[37] noting that those of Jefferys and López were available, along with several other, '… even more defective ones'.[38] Pelet also decried the amount of contradictory information provided to Massena and the basic information such as the practicality of roads and bridges.[39] This type of intelligence was essential for planning the routes into Portugal and down to Lisbon. With the beginning of the siege of Almeida, Pelet admitted, 'We lacked information about Portugal … from the very first I had been worried about Almeida; moreover we had no diagram'.[40] *Chef d'Escadron* Jean Marbot, an aide-de-camp to Massena, was critical of the situation regarding intelligence and topographical information for the coming invasion, caused by, '… the utter want of topographical knowledge of the districts in which we were fighting … The only [map] in existence was as bad as could be …'.[41]

The French army engineers were capable of producing high quality maps and surveys incorporating all the data required by a commanding officer to plan the routes of advance.[42] The question remains unanswered as to why Massena and his staff did not acquire from Paris this type information for themselves before the invasion. Massena was in Paris when he was appointed to command, and thus could have availed himself of the information there. He received, '… some kind of geography of Portugal …' from the ministry,[43] but apparently nothing else. This 'geography' was composed of manuscripts and a military reconnaissance of Portugal. Massena also had in his army officers of high rank who had been to Portugal before, but it appears that only at the point of invasion were their opinions sought, and little use could be made of the documents.[44] *Général de Brigade* Thiébault provided two good memoranda, but additional information provided, '… contradicted each other; they were either based on misinformation or apparently drawn up to confirm the specific systems of campaign plans of their authors'.[45] Between his appointment in April and the invasion of Portugal in September, Massena and his staff collected little information about Portugal or the invasion route he would take. Pelet remarked that Massena, '… was given only two or three rather poor accounts about Portugal and none of the maps or reconnaissance which were essential for such a difficult and unfamiliar country. There were many reports in Paris, but unfortunately we did not have them'.[46] One report which Massena may have had was entitled *Rapport sur la route de Lisbonne a Almeida par Coimbra, 1er Sortie, Etat des Chemins*, dated Lisbon 7 February 1808, which recorded the route via Viseu and Tondella,

37 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.18.
38 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.135.
39 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.136.
40 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.94.
41 Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcelin Marbot, *The Memoirs of Baron De Marbot: Late Lieutenant-General in the French Army*, Napoleonic Library 10–11 (London: Greenhill Books, 1988), Vol.2, p.107.
42 For example, TNA, WO 37/10/9, 'Report on the Roads from Trujillo to Merida', 1 May 1809; Arquivo Histórico Militar, PT/AHM/DIV/1/14/001/092, 'Relatório Do Capitão de Engenharia Boucherat Sobre as Estradas de Lisboa a Almeida Por Coimbra'. (Lisbon, 7 February 1808).
43 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.135.
44 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.33. Pelet was instructed to obtain information from *Généraux* Kellermann and Donnadieu.
45 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.136.
46 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.18.

and covered many of the other significant locations of the early part of the campaign.[47] The French command is reported to have relied to a large extent on maps by Jefferys and López.[48] Pelet remarked that the French needed to send out mounted reconnaissance to make written reports as, '… we were in effect without maps, since that of López, in spite of its large scale, was poorly marked, the roads and rivers horribly drawn and the terrain even more poorly represented'.[49] A treatise published by *Général de Division* Dumouriez offered advice of which Massena might have taken heed, and was certainly available to him before the invasion. Dumouriez wrote regarding Almeida, '… the conquest of the fortress is of no importance with regard to the real frontier of Portugal. The conqueror of Almeida is not more certain of penetrating to the heart of the kingdom, than he was before he took it'.[50]

In preparation for the invasion, Pelet had itinerary maps made for each of the corps commanders which were sent along with schedules of the daily marches required of the troops. The schedules showed, '… the day-by-day situation of each army corps, the advance guard, the grand parc, and the general headquarters, with the distances to be traveled [*sic*], the distance between columns, the roads to be followed, and observations on the principal modifications in the orders'.[51] Examples of those maps can be found in the Archives of the French Army at Vincennes. The maps include roads not shown on López or Jefferys.[52] They show the roads between the main towns, indicating their practicability for different methods of transport.[53] The roads are marked 'practicable for wagons' or 'difficult for wagons & practicable for cavalry'. Itineraries were drawn up throughout the campaign providing the corps with their relevant marching routes.[54]

Because of the threat from guerrillas in both Spain and Portugal reconnaissance was carried out in force. When Ney was ordered to reconnoitre the plateau around Fort Concepción, Loison assembled three thousand infantry, light cavalry and several pieces of artillery for the action.[55] Whatever troops were used for reconnaissance, if the villages were empty it would be very difficult to fix one's location accurately, as Barrès wrote, '… it was more often than not impossible for me to discover the names of the town or villages we passed through, for we did not meet in them a single inhabitant'.[56] Marching through an inhospitable country whose inhabitants had been raised in armed resistance meant the advance into Portugal required detailed plans for routes of supply and creation of magazines.[57] The

47 Arquivo Histórico Militar, PT/AHM/DIV/1/14/001/092, 'Relatório Do Capitão de Engenharia Boucherat Sobre as Estradas de Lisboa a Almeida Por Coimbra'.

48 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.135.

49 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.55.

50 Charles François Du Périer Domouriez, *État Présent Du Royaume De Portugal* (Lausanne: Chez Francois Grasset & Comp, 1775), p.21.

51 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.153; Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.374–76; SHD, 7C9, 'Armée de Portugal, 7C9'.

52 Charles-Alphonse Raeuber, 'Cartography, Topography, and the Third French Invasion of Portugal' (International Congress on the Peninsular War, Almeida, 1984), p.6.

53 SHD, GR6 ML12 C3 N33 (1), 'Croquis Des Chemins de Viseu a Coimbra', 1810; Raeuber, *Renseignements*, pp.66–67.

54 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.44.

55 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.375–76, Rapport du maréchal Masséna, prince d'Essling, au prince Berthier, major général, Salamanque, 29 July 1810.

56 Jean-Baptiste Barrès, *Memoirs of a French Napoleonic Officer* (London: Greenhill, 1988), p.142.

57 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.134.

French could not afford to send small parties out, as they would be targets for the guerrillas and militia bands in the countryside. Large forces were needed for self-defence, but were far from being inconspicuous. By these means the French army revealed its intentions whenever it moved. Being on reconnaissance or outpost duty provided opportunities for soldiers to desert, and there was a constant trickle coming to the allies from the French.

Desertion was not all one way and Pelet records Portuguese deserters carrying information about the advance of V Corps into Alentejo.[58] The French had spies in the enemy camp who regularly passed on information through the front lines. Reports came across the lines outside Lisbon of allied reinforcements arriving in the capital, as well as stories of the location of different units behind the defences.[59] Massena received reports from Lisbon regarding the accumulation of transports in the harbour. 'Lord Wellington keeps at the mouth of the Mondégo [*sic*], and near Lisbon, transport vessels, and has them marked in such a way that every officer, non-commissioned officer, and soldier, perfectly knows which he is on …'.[60] The letter continued by stating that the English were in Portugal, not to prevent its occupation, but to execute their duty in the eyes of Europe. It seems that Massena was expecting the Allied army to take to the boats as soon as honourably possible, and this opinion was held by many Portuguese.

Logistics

Napoleon was very clear in his instructions for the creation of the forces which would eventually be the *Armée de Portugal*, and their introduction into the Peninsula. 'In Spain we must proceed step by step … As it is now November [1809], it would be impossible to collect all our resources, especially powder and artillery, before the beginning of January; and in a peninsula like Spain, intersected by lofty mountains, nothing can be attempted at that season'.[61] He then directed that reinforcements to be marched into Spain over the next three to four months.

His instructions for Massena's conduct of the campaign dictated that the invasion would begin in September, '… after the heat, and especially after the harvest'.[62] This, Napoleon thought, would provide adequate food and supplies for the advancing French army until it reached Lisbon. This timing did not take account of the rains that descend on Portugal from October, and continued for days, sometimes weeks at a time.[63] It did not take into account any reversal Massena might face, which would put him in Portugal over the winter, a time when large numbers of troops would have difficulty subsisting in the country. Napier wrote,

58 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.305–6.

59 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.400–401.

60 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.367–69, Pieces Justificatives, Lettre du maréchal Masséna, prince d'Essling, au prince Berthier, major général, Au fort de la Conception, 20 August 1810.

61 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.81, 558, Napoleon au Clarke, Fontainbleau, 30 October 1809.

62 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.21, p.385, 16519, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Le Havre, 29 May 1810.

63 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.214–18; Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.103; Eliot, *A Treatise on the Defence of Portugal*, p.3.

'"In Spain large armies will starve and small armies will be beaten" was a saying of Henry IV of France, and this was no light phrase of an indolent monarch but the profound conclusion of a sagacious general'.[64]

The countryside around the Spanish/Portuguese border furnished very little in the way of supplies, with the French initially relying to a great extent on magazines in Salamanca and other places.[65] The French armies were accustomed to using stores and arsenals to maintain their army, supported by the practice of local requisition, and in some cases outright plunder.[66] Napoleon had ordered that the provinces occupied by the *Armée de Portugal* would provide provisions to the army, and in addition rations would be issued from French stores in Spain.[67] Primarily, though, as Pelet remarked, the, '… army was to be fed and maintained by the people of the countryside'.[68] Ciudad Rodrigo was earmarked by Napoleon as the general magazine for the *Armée de Portugal*, where rations and other supplies would be accumulated once the invasion had begun.

Much effort was expended at the beginning of the campaign to provide sufficient rations for the army, and the demands and delays this imposed indicated the difficulties that lay ahead in obtaining sufficient provisions. The scale of the demand for supplies was immense. During Reynier's II Corps' march across Biscay in February 1810, nearly 3,000,000 rations of biscuit were ordered to be provided by the bakeries of Vittoria, San Sebastian, Burgos, and Madrid.[69] *Général de Division* Dorsenne was ordered to make 500,000 rations of biscuit and '… several millions of rations of food …', over and above those needed by his own troops, to provide for the forces passing through to Massena's army.[70] Napoleon sent several letters outlining the demands for the preparation, storage and distribution of rations that the army would need, and magazines to store them in. This is in direct conflict with the accepted view that Napoleon's armies made no provision for magazines or regular supply of rations to the troops.[71] The historian Martin Van Creveld demonstrates that Napoleon was careful about establishing magazines for his armies, relying to some extent on completing a campaign quickly, thus obviating the need for large stores of food and other supplies.[72] The French armies depended on making local towns and villages provide supplies for the army as it moved through the area, cooking biscuit rations and providing meat. There would also be a demand for a 'contribution' in money or goods to support the army. This combination of magazines, quickly moving armies and local requisition had stood the French in good stead in Europe for the last five years. Napoleon was expecting the *Armée de Portugal* to be

64 Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula*, Vol.VI, p.681.

65 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.28.

66 Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton*, 2nd ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.2.

67 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.116, 605, Napoleon to Berthier, Compiègne, 9 April 1810.

68 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.18.

69 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.120, 16132, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Paris, 11 January 1810.

70 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.387, 16520, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Le Havre, 29 May 1810.

71 Clausewitz, *On War*, p.14.

72 Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, p.2.

able to march from Almeida to Lisbon, collecting and harvesting food along the way, in a quick occupation of the country.

However, magazines were only useful if they could be kept well-stocked and protected from the enemy. Additionally, the supplies in the magazines need to be transported to the army as required, something which the French would have problems with because of the bands of militia and guerrillas that intercepted movements behind the French advance, as well as a lack of transportation. As the supplies from the magazines dried up, more reliance would be placed on local requisition, and when that failed, simple theft. The failure to keep their lines of communication open would have dire consequences. If the French were to establish magazines and a supply line to provide for their forces, it would be through guerrilla-infested country, and subject to frequent attack from militia and other regular and irregular forces. The French would be forced into providing garrisons along the supply routes which would denude their army of troops. *Capitaine* Pierre François Guingret, an officer in the 6e Légère, noted,

> However rich and fertile a country is, it is impossible for a foreign army to survive for long when they are completely deprived of aid from the inhabitants … in a remote country, overland convoys cannot supply enough to feed an army when the requirements are high. This observation applies … to l'Armée de Portugal, which found itself far from any assistance and unable to even receive ammunition convoys to replace what had been used in combat.[73]

During the early stages of the campaign, even before the invasion of Portugal, Massena was complaining of the lack of food, and criticising the limited transportation available to the army corps.[74] Massena repeated this complaint to Berthier on 17 July.[75] The VIII Corps was obliged to abandon 80,000 badly needed rations of biscuit at Zamora because of a lack of transport, and the VI Corps had to employ its ambulances to move 15,000 rations as all its other wagons were full.[76] The troops were issued with ten days' rations prior to the invasion, Massena expected that the areas around Viseu and Coimbra would provide any supplies the army could not carry for itself.[77] Once Coimbra was reached, the road from there to Lisbon was known to pass through fertile and well cultivated country, and would be expected to provide the necessary food and forage for the army. No indication had reached the French of the orders issued to the Portuguese to remove or destroy food as the enemy approached.

In addition to the scarcity of food, the ability to move large quantities of supplies was limited by the lack of wagons and draught horses. At the beginning of the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, even before the invasion of Portugal, Ney complained to Massena that he had

73 Pierre François Guingret, *Relation Historique et Militaire de La Campagne de Portugal, Sous Le Maréchal Masséna, Prince d'Essling* (Limoges: Chez Bargeas, 1817), pp.116–17.

74 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.276, Massena au Berthier, Salamanca, 5 June 1810.

75 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.369, Massena au Berthier, Salamanca, 17 July 1810.

76 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.39; Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.162.

77 SHD, 7C9, 'Armée de Portugal, 7C9', Journal de l'Expédition de Portugal, 15 au 27 septembre, 1810.

insufficient wagons to move food and supplies for his troops surrounding the city.[78] The army lacked adequate horses, mules and oxen for its artillery, engineering and logistical units.[79] Massena wrote to Berthier from Ciudad Rodrigo that, 'We have a lot of trouble with food, especially because of the lack of transportation. There are no horses or wagons in the country; we must move everything ourselves, and it takes three days for the convoys to arrive from Salamanca'.[80] The loss of draught horses and oxen throughout the campaign was particularly difficult for the French, meaning fewer guns and wagons could be hauled along with the advancing army.[81] VIII Corps, as an example, had 1,126 horses in the equipment train on 30 June. This number had fallen to 142 by 15 September.[82] Whether these horses had been transferred to other units, or become unable to work, is not known, but it would have seriously affected the ability of the train to provide transport for the necessary equipment and supplies. According to Fririon, by the end of the siege of Almeida the lack of fodder had resulted in the deaths of 1,500 horses from the artillery train alone.[83] He recorded that of the 14,313 horses listed in the army when it began its advance after the sieges, only 11,133 were present on 31 December 1810, the artillery losing 2,099.[84] Fririon recorded that in the first half of March 1811 alone, the army lost 707 horses.[85] The lack of forage for horses was even worse than the lack of food for the men, as horses will suffer much more quickly without proper food. Much of the French cavalry became ineffective as the condition of the horses had deteriorated, leaving them unable to carry a fully laden cavalryman.

It was not only the transportation of food that occupied the minds of Massena and his officers. The army would need to transport the necessary ammunition for the coming campaign. According to Martin van Creveld, '… a typical division of 8,000 men took along 147-300 rounds per [artillery] gun but only 97,000 infantry rounds in addition to the sixty to eighty carried on each man's back'.[86] Thus for an army 60,000 strong nearly three-quarters of a million musket rounds would be required in the different divisions' caissons. In fact, for the army as a whole, Massena had hoped for a reserve of twelve million rounds, but through lack of, '… lead and paper …' was forced to reduce this quantity.[87] According to Pelet, *Général de Division* Éblé reported the army had, '… only 700,000 to 800,000 cartridges in reserve …'[88] Fifty wagons were devoted to carrying powder and lead exclusively, so the army would bring along all of its ammunition requirements from the beginning of the campaign.[89] In a report to Massena from Éblé, he stated that in the caissons belonging to the Corps themselves, there were 2,720,000 rounds of musket ammunition, and in the parc reserve just over

78 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.319, Rapport du maréchal Ney au prince d'Essling, expédié le 10 mai 1810 de Salamanque à destination de Valladolid.
79 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.25–28.
80 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.21.
81 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.98–99. See also Belmas p.373-375.
82 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.565 and 568.
83 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.35.
84 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.127.
85 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.157.
86 Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, p.57.
87 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.62.
88 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.145.
89 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.162–163.

a million cartridges. With those carried by the soldiers, he estimated a total of 6,137,975 rounds with the army. Éblé reported, with evident frustration, that he had been forced to leave 950,000 rounds at Almeida for want of transport. He also related that there would be only two forges, a caisson of tools, and six caissons of gunpowder with the army. The general parc ammunition convoy would consist of some 67 wagons requiring 402 horses, with an extra 50 spare animals as replacements. '29 horses, very sick, lame or completely out of service, will remain at Almeida …'.[90] The poor state of the roads in Portugal added to the logistical problems. Those wagons that were available were shaken to pieces by the road surfaces, forcing the French to stop for days at a time to repair them. The periods of poor weather added to the woes of the men and animals. As well as making life generally trying, the roads became more difficult, with Massena complaining that during the preparations for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, '… it keeps raining, the roads are impassable; a piece of twenty-four, harnessed to twelve horses, makes at most two leagues a day; the arrival of foodstuffs also suffers from the greatest difficulties …'.[91]

Once the advance into Portugal had begun, Massena would have to decide whether to garrison troops in towns on the lines of communication, easing the problems of transportation by establishing magazines. However, there was no attempt to maintain garrisons during the advance from Almeida to Coimbra, and lack of numbers meant that after the garrisons had been detached for Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, there were insufficient forces to keep open the lines of communication back to Spain. Massena relied on the anticipated speed of his advance, and the likelihood that Wellington would run for his ships, for victory in the coming campaign.

90 Mullié, *Biographie Des Célébrités Militaires Des Armées de Terre et de Mer de 1789 à 1850*, Vol.2, pp.185–87, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au maréchal Masséna, Almeida, 11 September 1810.

91 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.16.

5

A Cautious System

Initial Plans

In March 1809 Sir Arthur Wellesley prepared a memorandum on the defence of Portugal which was to outline his plans for the next two years.[1] Wellesley's views of the defence of Portugal differed significantly from those of Sir John Moore, his predecessor as commander of the army.[2] Wellesley wrote that the Portuguese army would need reconstituting, and that a British field army would be needed. The overall command of Portugal's forces should be in the hands of the British. In addition, substantial financial support should be provided. He expanded on this is subsequent letters, expressing his opinion about the necessary parts of Portugal that must be held. It is clear that the defence of Lisbon and its environs was foremost in Wellesley's mind as he prepared to sail to Portugal to take up command in 1809.[3] He also had a clear understanding of the approach that would be taken by the French to secure the country. He wrote, 'My opinion was, that even if Spain should have been conquered, the French would not have been able to overrun Portugal with a smaller force than 100,000 men …'.[4] This was the number that Napoleon initially decided upon when he was considering commanding the French forces in the Peninsula in 1809-10.

Before the Talavera campaign, Wellesley had set down in his memorandum several elements to his plan which were vitally necessary. Firstly, the Portuguese army must be reconstituted, and the militia and *Ordenança* called up for service. By October 1809 this was already well underway, as Marshal Beresford had effective control of the Portuguese military as he sought to reorganise it. Financial control over the Portuguese economy was identified by Wellesley as being crucial for the successful restoration of the Portuguese army. It was necessary, he wrote, for, '… the King's Ambassador at Lisbon to give or withhold such sums as he might think necessary for the support of military establishments only, and to instruct him to see that the revenues of Portugal, whatever they might be, were in the first instance applied to the same objects'.[5]

1 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.181–83, Memorandum on the defence of Portugal, London, 7 March 1809.
2 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.811, Wellesley to the Earl of Liverpool, Viseu, 2 April 1810.
3 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.185–86, Wellesley to the Duke of Richmond, Portsmouth, 14 April 1809.
4 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.181–82, Memorandum on the defence of Portugal, London, 7 March 1809.
5 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.182, Memorandum on the defence of Portugal, London, 7 March 1809.

However, the Portuguese economy was in tatters, and revenue from taxation was almost non-existent. A *contribuicão extraordinaria*, or compulsory payment, was imposed in June 1809 but even this was insufficient to raise the required funds.[6] Several different types of additional taxation were proposed, but the British Government was forced to increase the subsidy paid to the Portuguese Regency Council to keep them in the war. Furthermore, Wellesley wrote,

> The whole of the army in Portugal, Portuguese as well as British, should be placed under the command of British officers. The Staff of the army, the Commissariat in particular, must be British ; and these departments must be extensive in proportion to the strength of the whole army which will act in Portugal, to the number of detached posts which it will be necessary to occupy, and in a view to the difficulties of providing and distributing supplies in that country.[7]

To successfully defend Portugal Wellesley suggested that 30,000 British troops, including 4,000 cavalry, and a large body of artillery would be required, along with 40,000 Portuguese militia and 30,000 regular troops. Wellesley wrote to Canning, 'I understand that our actual fighting force is nothing like the number, or even two-thirds of the number, mentioned in your letter … and [Portugal] is ill calculated for an obstinate resistance to the last'.[8] He therefore concluded that he must move against the French, rather than allow them to take the initiative. Although he arrived in Portugal in 1809 and optimistically set forth in cooperation with the Spanish, as instructed by his Government, he quickly learned that he working with them would be difficult. This insight into the problems of cooperation with the Spanish gave him pause for thought. The weeks after the retreat from Talavera was when the modified plan for the defence of Portugal matured, and was altered to be entirely defensive. Wellesley withdrew into Portugal to refit and rest his exhausted army.[9] He decided that he could not co-operate with the Spanish armies as the situation stood, his priority being orders to defend Portugal. In a letter to his brother a month after Talavera, the now Viscount Wellington wrote,

> … it might be asked, Is there no chance of resuming the offensive? In answer, I have to observe, that at present I see none, and hereafter certainly none. Your Excellency is informed of the history of the causes which led to the late change in our operations, from the offensive, after a victory, to defensive. The same causes would certainly exist if we were to recommence our operations.[10]

Wellington's plan to defend Portugal would therefore have to be developed using only those resources available to him in Portugal itself, or brought in by the Royal Navy. The ways in

6 Chaby, *Excerptos Historicos E Collecção De Documentos Relativos Á Guerra Denominada Da Peninsula*, Vol.3, p.129.
7 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.182, Memorandum on the defence of Portugal, London, 7 March 1809.
8 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.218, Wellesley to Canning, Jonquières, 25 March 1809.
9 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.427–28, Wellington to Marquis Wellesley, Jaraicejo, 18 August 1809.
10 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.447, Wellington to Marquis Wellesley, Merida, 24 August 1809.

which he chose to defend the country shifted focus to a defensive campaign which involved the fullest mobilisation of the Portuguese nation, the creation of defensive lines around Lisbon, a scorched earth policy in the event of French invasion, and the concentration of British and Portuguese troops together in a field army. In addition, the border fortresses were to be reinforced to delay French entry into Portugal. Every possible advantage would be used in the coming campaign.

Wellington's New Plan

This was a campaign with a clear objective – protection of Lisbon and maintenance of a free Portugal. Wellington had set out his plans with clarity, and what he believed would be the operations of the enemy. This was set within the British Government's policy of continued opposition to Napoleon's rule of France and waging aggressive war throughout Europe. Wellington's modified plan was what might be termed 'indirect', or as he called it, his 'cautious system'.[11] He would avoid battle if possible, withdrawing his forces in the face of the enemy advance and hopefully lure the French towards the prepared positions around Lisbon. If he had to offer battle, or the opportunity arose of doing so in a secure location, Wellington was satisfied he could do so without risking the army. He later wrote to Charles Arbuthnot, Secretary to the Treasury, stating, '… they won't draw me from my cautious system. I'll fight them only where I am pretty sure of success; and if I should succeed, they must be destroyed'.[12]

Wellington wrote another memorandum to Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, the commander of his engineers in Portugal, regarding the defence of Lisbon. This often seen as the beginning of this new plan to defend Portugal, but it is in fact a product of the ruminations Wellington had been having since the retreat from Talavera, and possibly even earlier.[13] In the month immediately after Talavera, Wellington broke down the problem of defending Portugal into its constituent parts, identifying the bare minimum required for its defence, and, if necessary, the embarkation of the army.

In a letter to Castlereagh Wellington expounded his ideas as a consequence of the recent operations, writing, 'The information which I have acquired in the last two months has opened my eyes respecting the state of the war in the Peninsula ; and I shall just state a few facts which will enable the King's ministers to form their own opinions upon it'.[14] The formation of the modified plan comes out in a few short sentences:

> My opinion is, that we ought to be able to hold Portugal, if the Portuguese army and militia are complete. The difficulty upon this sole question lies in the embarkation of the British army. There are so many entrances into Portugal, the whole country being frontier, that it would be very difficult to prevent the enemy from penetrating;

11 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.234, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Celorico, 19 August 1810.
12 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.612, Wellington to the Right Honourable C. Arbuthnot, Alcobaça, 5 October 1810.
13 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.57, Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, Lisbon, 20 October 1809.
14 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.449–54, Wellington to Castlereagh, Merida, 25 August 1809.

> and it is probable that we should be obliged to confine ourselves, to the preservation of that which is most important, the capital.[15]

Thus the problem rested on two interconnected points: the survival of the British army, and the defence of Lisbon. He continued, 'It is difficult, if not impossible, to bring the contest for the capital to extremities, and afterwards to embark the British army … However, I have not entirely made up my mind upon this interesting point. I have a great deal of information upon it, but I should wish to have more before I can decide upon it'.[16] Wellington concluded by indicating that the war would not be decided in the way the British government wanted; by the Spanish and Portuguese armies supported by a small field force of British troops. Instead, all resources must be made available, financial as well as military, for the defence of Portugal and the eventual defeat of the French armies. Wellington also pointed out to the British Government the folly of cooperation with the Spanish armies, writing, 'A British army of 30,000 men, or even of 40,000 men, would not be sufficient in co-operation, or in conjunction with the Spanish armies, to effect the deliverance of the whole of the Peninsula …'.[17]

Wellington subsequently wrote several letters and memoranda discussing, in detail, the situation in Portugal as he saw it. His major concern was to safeguard the allied field army, and so he made a concerted effort to ensure that he had protected embarkation points in the event of defeat.[18] Wellington outlined his expectations for the coming campaign in a letter to Vice Admiral Berkeley in October 1809.

> It is probable … that in the event of the enemy being enabled to invade this country in force, he will make his principal attack by the right of the Tagus; but he will employ one corps upon the left of that river, with the immediate object of embarrassing, if not preventing, the embarkation of the British army, and of precluding the use of its navigation by the allies.[19]

The vice admiral was to give his opinion on the various embarkation points, should the British army be defeated. The need for a protected place to embark the army consumed much time of the engineers and Navy, Peniche being at one time considered to be a good possibility. However, Peniche's location outside the main lines of defence meant that São Julião would instead be the location chosen, and it was prepared accordingly.[20]

Wellington wrote about the risk to the army in protecting the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida in the plains by the border, declaring, '… it would be impossible for an army, acting upon the defensive, to carry on its operations upon the frontier without being cut off from the capital. The scene of the operations of the army would therefore most probably

15 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.453, Wellington to Castlereagh, Merida, 25 August 1809.
16 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.453, Wellington to Castlereagh, Merida, 25 August 1809.
17 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.477, Observations on Mr. Canning's Dispatch of the 13 August to Marquis Wellesley, Badajoz, 5 September 1809.
18 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.563–64, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Lisbon, 26 October 1809.
19 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.563–64, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Lisbon, 26 October, 1809.
20 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.563–64, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley. Lisbon, 26 October 1809.

be considerably within the frontier …'.[21] He understood that he had limited means at his disposal to implement his chosen plan, and that prioritisation of the elements of his plans was vitally important. There were many tasks to complete, but they must be completed in the correct order. He had expressed this view in a letter to Berkeley in March 1810, stating, '… I must not undertake what is not necessary, with insufficient means'.[22]

The details of implementing the plan began with the need for a port capable of receiving large Royal Navy vessels, and Lisbon was such a port. 'The great object in Portugal is the possession of Lisbon and the Tagus … There is another also connected with that first object … viz; the embarkation of the British troops in case of reverse'.[23] Wellington needed a defensible location from which he could safely embark the army, if it became necessary. Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher of the Royal Engineers was instructed to find a suitable location which could be easily defended whilst the embarkation took place. This would be the final position held by the British if the campaign were to go awry. Fletcher wrote to Wellington, '…There is a bay about 400 yards broad to the eastward of, and immediately adjoining, Fort St. Julian's. This appears favourable for beaching boats …'.[24] However, he cautioned that,

> … as [the army] would necessarily be in masses, some loss … must be sustained from the fire of the enemy's artillery, should it not be altogether kept in check by that of the fort and the work … The bay itself may be considered by naval officers as objectionable, and I am aware that the situation is not by any means all that could be wished.[25]

Despite these drawbacks, São Julião and its adjacent fort was selected as the embarkation point of the army. As the safety of the army was paramount, the works to protect this embarkation point began first. Sufficient transports were to be kept in the Tagus to enable the British Army to be evacuated, as well as a large proportion of the Portuguese, if they would go. Wellington considered the option of sending some troops to Cadiz, and ordered the provision of supplies to be laid in there in case of embarkation. He was particularly concerned about the horses of the army, ensuring that there would be 30,000 rations of forage and straw collected in Cadiz for such a crisis.[26]

As the plan for the other defences matured, and with the reassurance of a secure location to take the army off if necessary, the army was to be positioned in such a way as to defend the approaches to Lisbon in the most flexible way possible. To counter the threat of a two-pronged attack into Portugal, Wellington's over all arrangement was to divide his forces into two main corps and one subsidiary corps; one commanded by himself and positioned to

21 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.563–64, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Lisbon, 26 October, 1809.
22 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.795, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Viseu, 23 March 1810.
23 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.557, Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, Lisbon, 20 October 1809.
24 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.404, Fletcher to Wellington, Lisbon, 15 October 1809.
25 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.404, Fletcher to Wellington, Lisbon, 15 October 1809.
26 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.117, Wellington to Graham, Celorico, 13 June 1810.

the north, the other on the Tagus commanded by Lieutenant General Hill.[27] In the memorandum to Fletcher, Wellington explained,

> … the whole allied army, after providing for the garrisons of Elvas, Almeida, Abrantes, and Valenca [*sic*], should be divided into three corps, to be posted as follows: one corps to be in Beira; another in Alentejo ; and the third, consisting of the Lusitanian legion, 8 battalions of *Caçadores* [*sic*], and 2 of militia, in the mountains of Castello Branco.
>
> In the winter, the corps in Beira should consist of two thirds of the whole numbers of the operating army. In the summer, the corps in Beira and Alentejo should be nearly of equal numbers.[28]

The limited access routes for an army into Portugal, united with the further restrictions the seasonal changes in the weather would place on movement, Wellington's plan made the best of the options available to him.

In an attempt to make a vice from a virtue, Wellington proposed a scorched earth policy which would deny the French the means to live off the land as they were accustomed to do. Wellington issued a proclamation to the population ordering them to remove themselves and anything of use from the reach of the advancing French army, with draconian punishment threatened for those who ignored the order. He relied on the French to pursue their campaign in the same way that they had previously: by relying initially on their logistical support, but advancing rapidly to obtain the supplies they required to supplement their rations as they went, and above all to keep moving into areas where supplies had not been exhausted. This was a strength of the French armies when they campaigned in fertile Central Europe, but it appeared logical to make a weakness from it in Portugal where conditions were considerably different. In Central Europe supplies were plentiful and the army could move swiftly whilst living off the land. In Spain and Portugal food, and sometimes even fresh water, was in short supply, especially for a large number of troops concentrated in a small area. Wellington's plan was to thwart the French foraging parties either by armed militia, or by removing the food and supplies they were searching for, as well as cutting them off from resupply. Extensive plans were made to deny transport and provisions to the French during their advance into Portugal. Resources which might be useful to the enemy would either be removed or destroyed. As they advanced, the enemy's rear would be harassed by *Ordenança* and guerrillas, cutting them off from friendly support and communications, and more importantly, from resupply. The enemy would be drawn on to the defences around Lisbon where they had a simple choice to make: attack or retreat.

The limited number of metalled roads meant they achieved great significance for both armies. Wellington issued orders for several roads to be repaired, for example the roads from Ponte da Murcella to Almeida and to Espinhal. *Tenente General* Bacellar, Governor of Beira, was to instruct the local magistrates to direct the workforce to make repairs, and Wellington would, '… send an officer along the road in the course of a short time to see

27 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.652, Wellington to Hill, Badajoz, 18 December 1809.
28 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.557, Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, Lisbon, 20 October 1809.

what has been done …'.[29] Conversely, Colonel Sir John Wilson, commanding a force of Portuguese militia, was ordered to destroy parts of the *Estrada Nova*, and to position some troops near these areas to prevent repairs being made by the enemy.[30] Later, Wellington wrote a confidential memorandum to Bacellar detailing the preparations to be undertaken for the invasion. He informed Bacellar that his priority was to keep the French out of Beira, but if they did invade, he wanted to be able to limit their operations, and limit their access to provisions, while they were established in the country. To achieve these results, the district *Capitãos Mors,* men who had been appointed to command the local *Ordenança,* should make their companies of militia and *Ordenança* ready for duty. The bridges over the rivers Coa, Mondego, Alva and Zezere should be prepared for demolition, and units of *Ordenança* stationed near them, ready to delay any enemy attempts to repair them.[31]

The first part of Wellington's operational plan was outlined in letters to Major General Cole and Brigadier General Craufurd in January 1810, when he wrote of his desire to remain in control of the Rio Coa, but if necessary to withdraw from it, concentrating his forces.[32] Wellington's memorandum of 31 January is perceptive in planning a withdrawal from the Coa and concentrating around Ponte da Murcella and Mealhada, with Brigadier General Richard Blunt ordered to occupy, 'the pass between Mealhada and Martagoa, [*sic*] near the convent of Busaco [*sic*] …' with his Portuguese brigade and a battery of Portuguese artillery.[33]

D'Urban noted that Wellington believed the invasion of Portugal would be soon after the arrival of Junot's forces from France.[34] Wellington wrote that when the new French forces come to the Peninsula their, '… first and great object will be to get the English out'.[35] He was well informed, and knew of the preparations the French were making for the invasion. On 23 May 1810 he wrote to the Earl of Liverpool; 'Marshal Massena arrived at Salamanca on the 15th instant, and took command of the … Army of Portugal, in which I conclude are the troops in Leon, Old Castile, and Estremadura. The enemy have, however, made no movement of importance in this quarter …'.[36] Wellington was reluctant to share his plan with the British Government for fear that it would be leaked to the press. For Napoleon, the British press was the main source of intelligence about Wellington's activities and the strength of the British Army in Portugal.[37] Wellington, on the other hand, had a variety of intelligence sources to work from.

29 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.706–7, Wellington to General Bacellar, Viseu, 26 January 1810.

30 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.736, Wellington to Colonel Wilson, Viseu, 18 February 1810.

31 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.756–58, Wellington to Lieutenant General Bacellar, Governor of the Province of Beira, Confidential memorandum, 1 March 1810.

32 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.712 Wellington to Cole, Viseu, 30 January 1810; *Ibid* Vol.3, p.716, Wellington to Craufurd, Viseu, 31 January 1810.

33 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.717–18, Memorandum left with Lieutenant General Sherbrooke, Viseu, 31 January 1810.

34 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.81.

35 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.453, Wellington to Castlereagh, Merida, 25 August 1809.

36 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.86, Wellington to Earl of Liverpool, Celorico 23 May 1810.

37 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.378, Au prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, Dieppe, 27 May 1810.

Intelligence and Communications

Wellington, as commander-in-chief, had ordered the surveying of large areas of central Portugal, from Oporto down to Lisbon, especially the areas of Estremadura and Alentejo. Intelligence was available about the size and suitability of the roads and bridges, and the capability of villages and towns to billet and support a given number of troops. Locals were mostly friendly, although some Portuguese peasants asked if they were allowed to kill German cavalry in the Allied army, as they were misbehaving.[38] Despite this, the allies had support from a large number of the Portuguese peasantry. There were some problems obtaining reliable intelligence from some of the local population in the border region, as Dickson wrote: 'We ought to know every, even the smallest, change in [the French] position, whereas very little to be depended on can be obtained, beyond the observation of Officers sent for the purpose …'.[39] Rewards were offered to the Portuguese peasantry for the safe delivery of French deserters or prisoners.[40] This was intended to keep the prisoners alive, both to encourage more desertion from the French army, as well as to provide first-hand information from the soldiers of the state of the enemy.

Communications throughout Portugal were improved by the use of telegraph stations placed at important points, such as Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, as well as within the defences around Lisbon. There already existed a partial network of telegraph stations, begun in 1809 with Lisbon as the central point, manned by the *Corpo Telegraphico*. On the arm of the network which ran to Almeida, there were 16 posts sited on high ground.[41] This network was based on the use of Portuguese single-arm telegraphs, the design of which is variously attributed to *General de Brigada* Pedro Folque or Francisco Ciera.[42] Wellington was familiar with the use of telegraphs, having mentioned their employment to Castlereagh in a letter of 13 April 1809, with respect to the telegraph operating in the south of England.[43] He first mentioned them in respect to the forces in Portugal in a letter to Vice Admiral Berkeley in March 1810, when he informed the vice admiral that he had asked Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher to discuss the subject with him.[44] The benefits of the telegraph system showed themselves during the siege of Almeida, allowing Wellington to regularly corresponded with Governor Cox.[45] Intelligence was rapidly passed from the front lines to Wellington's headquarters using the telegraph system on the frontier, enabling him to react more quickly to French movements than would have been the case if information only travelled by courier.

At the defences around Lisbon, Fletcher and the engineers erected signal stations on the first line of defences at Alhandra, Sobral, Monte Soccora, Torres Vedras, and Ponte de Rol

38 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.209–10, Wellington to Cotton, Celorico, 6 August 1810.

39 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.260, Letter to Major General J MacLeod, RA, Camp near Sarzedas, 27 August 1810.

40 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.281, The Adjutant General to Lieutenant Colonel Elley, 14 September 1810.

41 René Chartrand, *The Portuguese Army of the Napoleonic Wars (2)* (Oxford: Osprey, 2000), p.21.

42 Chartrand, *The Portuguese Army of the Napoleonic Wars (2)*, p.22; Mark S. Thompson, 'British Use of Telegraphs in the Peninsular War', *The Royal Engineers Journal* 130, no. 2 (December 2016)

43 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.815, Wellington to Castlereagh, Portsmouth, 13 April 1809.

44 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.782, Wellington to Berkeley, Viseu, 15 March 1810.

45 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.198–99, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Celorico, 11 August 1810.

for the use of the army once it had retreated to the lines.[46] Signals could be sent quickly, which was very important for the telegraph network in the Lines. As Wellington's plan for the Lines relied on moving reinforcements swiftly to any threatened sector, speedy communications were vital. Those telegraphs built in the lines were based on the Royal Naval messaging system employing balls or flags to transmit signals. This was a more complicated system and using a complex decoding book, '… the vocabulary used was that of the navy, many sentences and short expressions peculiar to the land service being added …'.[47] Wellington wrote to Berkeley,

> I am very desirous that the naval code of signals and cyphers should be cut out of these books, in order that no evil should result from their falling into bad hands. I should also be very much obliged to you if you could give us some assistance in forming an establishment for each of these stations. I cannot well spare officers to go down and learn how to use a telegraph; and I am afraid of the mistakes and blunders which will result from using them by their agency, without previous instruction.[48]

The preparation of the telegraph system was not without its difficulties. The most serious problem with telegraphs was they relied on line of sight, and were subject to interruptions to visibility. The weather did not just cause visibility problems, as Jones wrote to Fletcher:

> I am sorry I cannot give you a favourable account of the signal stations ; the sailors say, that the distance between the stations is too great, and that the masts are all too light for the yards ; on Sunday evening two were sprung : they also complain of the telescopes. I have ordered stronger masts and yards to be prepared for each post, and if better telescopes can be procured in Lisbon, I shall not hesitate to authorize the purchase of them. To render the Ponte de Rol signals visible, we are cutting down the pine-wood, which at present forms its back-ground.[49]

Fletcher replied:

> I am sorry to learn so bad an account of the signal-posts, we thought that from any one of them to the next nearest the balls would be very visible, and I am inclined to believe the principal fault lies in the telescopes, and I feel confident there will be no objection to your purchasing others of a better description, if you can find them.[50]

As Dickson explained, the quality of the equipment was not always the deciding factor: '… proceeded to Taverna Seca to see if we could see signals made from the hill above Sarzedas,

46 Grehan, *The Lines of Torres Vedras*, p.62.
47 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.90.
48 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.120–21, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Celorico, 15 June 1810.
49 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.238, Jones to Fletcher, Lisbon, 18 July 1810.
50 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.226, Fletcher to Jones, Alverca da Beira, 23 July 1810.

with the view to establishing a telegraph which Captain Squire is preparing, but with excellent spy glasses we could not make out the signals'.[51]

The Portuguese Army

The Portuguese Army had been reformed along Prussian lines in 1762-63 by the Graf von Schaumberg-Lippe-Bückeberg, but he had not stayed to see the completion of his reforms.[52] It never attained the recruiting levels desired; the army was understrength, miserably inefficient, and crippled by corruption. When the French invaded in 1807, the army was in no condition to oppose them. Following the occupation of Lisbon by Junot's exhausted men, the French disbanded the army, retaining some troops to create their own 'Portuguese Legion' which went on to serve in the campaign of 1812 in Russia. After the evacuation of the French from Portugal in 1808, there was realistically no Portuguese regular army.[53]

The Portuguese Regency Government attempted to rebuild the army following the expulsion of the French and set about recruiting and conscripting men. In addition to attempting to raise more troops, they requested aid from Britain in the reorganisation. The army was well below establishment, and poorly equipped and officered. Many who had previously served now volunteered, but the recruitment of so many inexperienced soldiers into the ranks meant that the training level of the troops was poor at first, and highlighted the need for more experienced officers and NCOs. The *Ordenança*, the Portuguese *levee en masse*, and the local militia, had been called out at the end of 1808 but were not in any condition to perform anything more than the most rudimentary of duties.[54] Both the *Ordenança* and militia were largely without uniforms and equipped with only the barest of armaments, many being issued with pikes rather than muskets. Equipment and weapons for the regular army would be the priority, with the establishment reaching 31,833 properly equipped troops by November 1808.[55]

To aid the reformation, William Carr Beresford was appointed Marshal of the Portuguese Army in February 1809.[56] Beresford was a good administrator and organiser, and was given the task of recruiting, reorganising and re-equipping the army by Dom Miguel Pereira Forjaz, the Secretary for War and a member of the Regency Council.[57] Beresford may have been recommended by Sir Arthur Wellesley, although some suggest his appointment was apparently based on the fact that he spoke a little Portuguese (he had been Governor of Madeira for a year).[58] He issued his first *Ordem do dia* on 21 March 1809 writing in confident tones about the need for discipline and the observation of duties.[59] As part of the process of

51 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.254, August 13, 1810.
52 Eliot, *A Treatise on the Defence of Portugal*, p.106.
53 Corrêa et al., *The Lines of Torres Vedras*, pp.93–95.
54 Eliot, *A Treatise on the Defence of Portugal*, p.219.
55 Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War*, Vol.2, p.214.
56 A. Halliday, *Observations on the Present State of the Portuguese Army* (London: Murray, 1811), p.5.
57 Corrêa et al., *The Lines of Torres Vedras*, p.97.
58 Richard Howard, *The Portuguese Regular Army* (Edinburgh: The Napoleonic Association, 1979), p.3.
59 Anon, (ed.), *Colecção Das Ordens Do Dia Do Illustrissimo e Excellentissimo Senhor Guilherme Carr Beresford, Anno 1809* (Lisboa: António Nunes dos Santos, n.d.), p.2, Quartel General do Calbariz, 21 March 1809.

reorganisation he had the British drill-manuals translated into Portuguese to standardise the drill of all the formations.

Initially, Beresford was given 24 British officers to bring organisation and discipline to the Portuguese but this was found to be insufficient.[60] The offer of transfers into Portuguese service and an increment in rank was broadened to all British officers and NCOs: for example a British captain would be made a major in the Portuguese army if he accepted the transfer. The idea that all Portuguese units should be commanded by British officers was dismissed by Beresford, who instituted a system of alternate nationalities. If a brigade was commanded by a British officer, then his two regiments would be commanded by Portuguese officers. In turn, their senior majors would be British.[61]

The success of Portuguese conscription and recruitment was demonstrated in 1810, certainly in raw numbers, with most of the regiments fighting at Buçaco fielding more than 1,000 men each. Some regiments had had only 200 or 300 men on strength a year before.[62] In terms of quality, the improvements took time. D'Urban reported in April 1810 that, 'The Brigade of Chasseurs (1st and 2nd) which were sent to General Craufurd, are returned unfit for service …'.[63]

The militia and O*rdenança* would perform essential duties during the campaign. Each district had a *Capitão Mór* who was responsible for the command of the local troops. Wellington specifically ordered them to be ready for the invasion to break up roads and destroy bridges in front of the advancing French, and then to close communications behind them. In addition, all transport and supplies were to be carried away or denied to the enemy.[64] The capture and execution of the *Ordenança* by French troops provoked a letter from Wellington to Massena during the campaign:

> It has given me the greatest sorrow to learn that you have given orders to the French Army not to take prisoners among the Portuguese Ordenanza [sic] and that the French troops are obeying this order and are shooting all of this body that fall into their hands … if the French Army continue to shoot the prisoners that are taken from the Ordenanza [sic], one cannot expect that the soldiers of this body as well as the other soldiers of the Portuguese Army not to retaliate on the prisoners which they take from the French Army. It will no longer be in my power to protect them, and the orders which you have given will be the cause of the misfortune that will be suffered by the soldiers of the French Army who fall into the hands of Portuguese troops.[65]

60 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.53; 'Beresford and the Portuguese Army, 1809-1814', in Berkeley, *New Lights on the Peninsular War*, p.150.

61 Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War*, Vol.4, p.174.

62 Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War*, Vol.4, p.172.

63 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.97.

64 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.753, 756–58, Confidential Memorandum, Wellington to Lieutenant General Leite, 28 February 1810, and Wellington to Lieutenant General Bacellar, Governor of the Province of Beira, 1 March 1810.

65 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.267–68, Wellington to the Commander in Chief of the French Army, Marshal Massena Prince d'Essling, Head Quarters of the English Army, 9 September 1810.

Massena replied that the *Ordenança* were thieves and brigands, but was reminded by Wellington that the French had fought *sans uniforme* in the Revolutionary Wars.[66] There was little either commander could do to stop the attacks and reprisals between the two sides, despite issuing orders.

The British Army

The army had suffered considerably during the retreat to La Coruña in 1808. After returning to Britain in January 1809 the job of restoring it to fighting readiness began immediately, but would take time. The first troops sent out under Wellesley's command were raw units, mostly second battalions, which had not seen service abroad, and were well below establishment strength. A British battalion of the time should have about 1,000 rank and file in its establishment, but many of the units initially sent to Lisbon were weaker, with less than 750 men. In addition, second battalions had all the less capable soldiers drafted into them from the first battalion, and so were less proficient fighting units. Additionally, some troops which would be headed for Portugal later in 1810 had been sent on the ill-fated expedition to Walcheren. The failure on that campaign had limited the number of experienced troops and transports available to Wellington. Those who had returned from Walcheren were also subject to 'Walcheren Fever', recurrent bouts of an illness contracted during the campaign.[67] The army gained valuable experience in the attack on Oporto and the Battle of Talavera in 1809, but following the retreat from Spain several units were completely unfit for active service, and many men were sick.[68]

The army was initially very weak in cavalry, but by the time of the opening of the campaign in 1810 Wellington would have over 3,000 sabres available. The cavalry was originally under the command of Lieutenant General Payne, with Lieutenant General Cotton as the second in command. From June 1810 Cotton was placed in command of the cavalry as Payne had returned to Britain, apparently as a result of the appointment of Sir Brent Spencer to replace Lieutenant General Sherbrooke, rather than himself.[69] This could have caused a dislocation of command in the cavalry as Payne had served under Wellington through the Talavera campaign, and their working relationship was good. Cotton, although an able cavalry commander, was to make some mistakes in the coming campaign that would introduce unnecessary friction to the army's retreat from Coimbra.

The army lacked healthy horses and equipment both for the cavalry and artillery and Wellington was keen to receive any reinforcements possible. In August 1810 he wrote,

> I should be very glad if you will send us the remount horses, and any regiment of dragoons that is to come, as soon as possible; the best thing to do then, probably,

66 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.297, Wellington to the Commander in Chief of the French Army, Marshal Massena Prince d'Essling, Head Quarters of the English Army, 24 September 1810; Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.157.

67 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.169, December 19.

68 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.456, Wellington to Marquis Wellesley, Merida, 28 August 1809.

69 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.91–92, Wellington to Lieutenant General Payne, Celorico, 28 May 1810.

> would be to draft the horses of one of the regiments to complete the others, and send that regiment home dismounted. It would be very desirable also to send us 600 or 700 sets of horse appointments.[70]

The organisation of the army into brigades and divisions was set out in a General Order dated 22 February 1810. The infantry was organised into five divisions under Sherbrooke (1st), Hill (2nd), Picton (3rd), Cole (4th), and Craufurd (Light).[71] The new Light Division incorporated two regiments of Portuguese *Caçadores*, and the 3rd and 4th Divisions each had an additional Portuguese brigade attached. Hill commanded his 2nd Division with an attached Portuguese Division under Major General Hamilton, with the whole often referred to as a 'corps'. There were also three independent brigades of Portuguese infantry which were at various times attached to existing divisions.

The 5th battalion of the 60th Foot, equipped with rifles, was broken into companies and distributed to the divisions to provide extra skirmishing capability. Lieutenant General Sherbrooke went back to Britain ill, and from 3 June the 1st Division was commanded by Lieutenant General Spencer. The cavalry was formed into six brigades, two of which were entirely Portuguese.[72]

The Light Division under Brigadier General Craufurd was the elite formation of Wellington's army, and it acted as the rearguard during the retreat, and the advanced guard when pursuing the retreating French. The division was composed of light infantry from Britain and Portugal, and in certain circumstances was combined with light cavalry from Britain and the King's German Legion, and light, mobile artillery from the Royal Horse Artillery. This division had additional Portuguese line infantry included under Craufurd's command during the retreat to Torres Vedras.[73]

Before the Battle of Buçaco, the army was to receive an additional division under Major General Leith, numbered as the 5th. Leith's division was initially unusual in that it comprised two Portuguese brigades and only one British. This changed with the arrival of another British brigade in October 1810, when it reverted to the standard of two British brigades and one Portuguese. Wellington was to receive a continual supply of reinforcements, allowing another restructuring of the army during its stay behind the lines around Lisbon. As the survivors of the Walcheren campaign were again deemed fit for service, they were added to the forces sent to Portugal. These reinforcements added another two divisions to the army, by mixing some experienced regiments with the new additions.[74]

With reinforcements came problems with discipline. Wellington was concerned that,

> … many of the regiments are composed almost entirely … from the Irish militia. A sufficient time has not elapsed, since these men have entered the regiments of

70 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.454, Wellington to Viscount Castlereagh, Merida, 25 August 1810.

71 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.744, General Order, Viseu, 22 February 1810.

72 TNA, WO 78/5962, 'Sketch Showing Situation of the Combined British and Portuguese Army under the Duke of Wellington in the Position of Busaco, When Attacked by French Army under Marshal Massena on 27 September 1810', 1810.

73 See Appendix III

74 Sir Charles Oman, *Wellington's Army* (London: Edward Arnold, 1913), pp.170–71.

> the line, to form their habits to regularity and discipline; the non-commissioned officers, in the 2d battalions principally, are very bad; and I am sorry to add that the subaltern officers are not of the best description … A detachment seldom marches … that a murder or a highway robbery, or some act of outrage, is not committed … they have killed 8 people since the army returned to Portugal in December …[75]

The infantry tactics employed by the British, and by extension the Portuguese, were different to those used by the French on the battlefield. The British drill manual had been translated into Portuguese so that all infantry units employed the same basic drill in battle, removing any confusion which might exist if different drill evolutions were used. The British infantry fought in a two-deep line formation which allowed every musket in the unit to fire at the enemy. The two-deep line was not an innovation of Wellington's but harks back to the development of infantry tactics during and after the War of Independence in America, in much the same way as the development of the light companies and rifle-armed units. Despite Dundas' *Rules and Regulations* dictating a three-deep formation, the two deep line was used throughout the period.

A British battalion in line was a wide, but very shallow, formation. For example, the 1st battalion of the 88th, or Connaught Rangers, had a strength of 679 rank and file, which would mean a frontage, given 22 inches per man,[76] of just over 200 yards (190 metres) but a depth of only four feet, with the second rank one or two paces behind the first. No soldier would take up exactly 22 inches, so there would naturally be a small variability in any formation. This means that any measurement given for any unit in any formation must be approximate.[77] And as the unit suffered casualties or had companies detached, the frontage of the line would shrink as the men filled the gaps next to them, and 'dressed' towards the centre of the unit. The line was a fragile formation and could be easily disorganised, and required extensive training on the part of the soldiers to keep the formation when moving over rough terrain. Sergeants, armed with a formidable looking halberd, and officers with their swords, were responsible for making sure the line 'dressed' correctly. Generally, movements to the battlefield, and those not in the direct presence of the enemy, would be undertaken in column, an easier formation to keep, especially if moving quickly.

There were two squadrons of the 4th Dragoons at Buçaco, with the other regiments watching the flanks for a French attempt to outflank the army. Despite not being employed during the battle, the cavalry fulfilled the role of outpost and piquet duty, and during the retreat made up the rear-guard along with the Light Division. Although the dragoons were meant to be medium cavalry and hussars and light dragoons categorised as light cavalry, there was little to distinguish them once on campaign other than their dress, and even this would begin to fade and be repaired with local cloth.

The artillery of the army comprised the Portuguese regiments, the Royal Artillery, Royal Horse Artillery and King's German Legion Artillery. British Royal Artillery batteries employed either 6- or 9-pounder cannon, and the horse artillery were equipped with

75 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.5, To the Adjutant General of the Forces, Viseu, 6 April 1810.

76 Dundas, *Rules and Regulations for the Formations, Field-Exercise, and Movements of His Majesty's Forces*, p.41.

77 Kenton White, 'On Maps and Manoeuvres: The Challenge of Mapping Waterloo', *British Journal for Military History* 2, no. 3 (2016), pp.62–77.

6-pounders. There were six guns in each battery, often referred to as a brigade of artillery. An innovation employed by the British artillery was the Spherical Case shot, or Shrapnel Shell. Normal shot from a cannon was solid, but at close ranges the artillery would use canister, which turned the cannon into a large shotgun. Canister was a tin can which contained large numbers of metal balls. This can would rupture on firing, and the balls would spread out in a lethal cone from the muzzle of the gun. Some guns, called howitzers, could fire exploding shells, but there were inefficient as they only broke up into several large pieces, although a hit from a piece of shell could rip a man in two. Spherical Case combined the properties of the shell with canister, and was a hollow metal ball which contained an exploding charge surrounded by musket balls. The aim would be to explode the shot over an enemy formation, spraying it with the balls. The effect was very destructive against close packed French columns, and Wellesley (as he was then) wrote of the, '… great benefit which the army lately under my command derived from the spherical case shot in two actions with the enemy …' after his first campaign in Portugal.[78] He partially revised his opinion after Buçaco:

> I have spoken to Sir W. Beresford, and shall speak to General Graham, respecting Shrapnell's shells. I have seen our artillery produce great effect on the enemy; and I have been induced to attribute this effect to the use of Shrapnell's shells. But my opinion in favour of these shells has been much shaken lately.
>
> 1st. I have reason to believe that their effect is confined to wounds of a very trifling description; and they kill nobody. I saw General Simon, who was wounded by the balls from Shrapnell's shells, of which he had several in his face and head; but they were picked out of his face as duck shot would be out of the face of a person who had been hit by accident while out shooting, and he was not much more materially injured.
>
> 2ndly. From the difficulty of judging of direct distances, and in knowing whether the shell has burst in the air in the proper place, I suspect that an original error in throwing the shells is seldom corrected; and that if the shell is not effectual the first shot, the continuance of the fire of these shells seldom becomes more effectual. I can entertain no doubt, however, that if the shell should be accurately thrown, and burst as it is intended, it must wound a great number of men, but probably none very materially.[79]

The artillerymen themselves were impressed with the weapon, suggesting that more of their ammunition should be made up of spherical case.[80]

78 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.166, Wellesley to Sir John Sinclair, Dublin Castle, 21 October 1808.

79 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.7, p.304, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Elvas, 12 March 1812.

80 Lipscombe, *Wellington's Guns*, p.44.

Logistics

Wellington was very careful with establishing his logistical system, especially after the near disaster of the Talavera campaign. He learned very quickly not to rely on others for supplies, but instead fell back on the tried-and-tested method of magazines, supported by the commissariat. Everything would be supplied either directly from the magazines via Lisbon, or bought locally and had to be paid for, preferably in coin.[81] There had been problems with debts from previous campaigns which had meant that supplies stockpiled by the British were made unavailable to them by the local Spanish administrative council of Ciudad Rodrigo. Biscuit which was to be removed to Almeida was held in respect of unpaid debts incurred during the campaign of Sir John Moore. Wellington complained bitterly that, '… this same Cabildo will call for assistance as soon as they shall perceive the intention of the enemy to attack them; having seized, and holding probably in their possession at the moment, the means which, if lodged as directed in the stores at Almeida, would enable me effectually to provide for their relief'.[82]

Wellington reported to the Earl of Liverpool at the end of January 1810 the state of the provisions in the magazines in Portugal, which included 1,792,160 lbs of biscuit, 113,990 gallons of rum, 99,062 pairs of shoes and 2,235 blankets.[83] This did not, of course, stop the troops from foraging for supplies when they could, and theft of items when the opportunity presented itself. A General Order dealing with the plundering of bee-hives around Badajoz in September 1809 reminded the troops that the short-term benefit gained was at the expense of the long-term trust of the local civilians.[84] In October 1810 a General Order was issued to search soldiers' packs, as anything not part of their regimental necessities was deemed plunder.[85] The punishments handed out were severe, with those caught risking being hanged.

Rations for the troops stood at one pound of meat and one pound of bread per day. If fresh meat could not be provided, then salt meat would be substituted. These rations could be varied depending on circumstances, but Wellington was aware that the better supplied his troops were, the better the level of discipline and confidence. The scale of supply can be demonstrated in the orders from Wellington to Beresford for the provision of beef to the Portuguese troops with the army on the frontier. This amounted to a maximum of 13,766lbs of beef per day. Forage for the horses varied according to what was available. The General Order of 31 January 1810 specified, 'As the produce of straw in this country is but small, the ration is to be reduced for 14lbs to 10lbs for each horse or mule; and that of Indian corn or barley increased to 12lbs'.[86] Wellington wrote to Marshal Beresford to keep his cavalry around Lisbon, where it could be supplied, rather than between the Tagus and

81 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.699, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Viseu, 24 January 1810.
82 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.464–68, Wellington to Marquis Wellesley, Merida, 1 September 1809.
83 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.714, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Viseu, 30 January 1810.
84 Gurwood (ed.), *General Orders*, pp.29–30, General Order, Badajoz, 7 September 1809.
85 Gurwood (ed.), *General Orders*, p.259, General Order, Leyria, 3 October 1810.
86 Gurwood (ed.), *General Orders*, p.100, General Order, Viseu, 31 January 1810.

the Mondego, where he might need to assemble large bodies of troops: '… we should take care of the resources in that part of the country, particularly the straw'.[87]

The Commissariat for the Portuguese army was in a bad state, described as being, '… conducted upon principles so radically bad, that although the expense has been enormous beyond all calculation, the army on almost every occasion has been actually starved'.[88] Finally, Wellington provided support for the Portuguese troops through the British army's commissariat where the Portuguese one was deficient.[89]

Transportation of the supplies to the troops was difficult in Portugal, a difficulty which was increased the further from the magazines the army went. Wagons and boats were registered so that they could be hired directly by the army when needed, but also so that when the French invaded they could be removed from the locality quickly. A proclamation had been issued in May which described refusing to supply carts or beasts of burden to the army as a crime subject to suitable punishment.[90] The solution to the problem was suggested as being, 'All horses, mules, asses, carts, [sic] &c., in every district, should be numbered and registered, with the owner's name, place where to be found, &c.; and all should be liable to be called for, and should be produced under a heavy penalty, when called for the use of the army'.[91]

It would be in the interest of the cart owners to hire them to the British because of the, '… regularity of payment …'[92] provided. In Wellington's opinion, however, the use of mules rather than carts was preferable as they were faster over the uncertain roads of Portugal. However, he also alluded to a problem regarding the supply of ammunition: if ammunition was to be moved in preference to provisions, then the troops would suffer from lack of food. Wellington's answer was pragmatic – create a separate magazine for ammunition closer to the army, thus reducing the workload of the local muleteers.[93] The main magazines for the British army were at Lisbon, Abrantes, and Santarem,[94] with additional forward magazines added at Almeida and Coimbra. The transport of the Allied army was not just wheeled or four-legged, but relied heavily on the Royal Navy for the supply of arms and equipment, food and, in the final extreme, evacuation. Wellington wrote in 1809, '… I think that Government should look to sending back at least the coppered transports … as they receive positive intelligence that Napoleon is reinforcing his armies in Spain: for you must depend on it … that when they come into the Peninsula, their first and great object will be to get the English out'.[95]

87 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.458, Wellington to Beresford, Merida, 30 August 1809.
88 Halliday, *Observations on the Present State of the Portuguese Army*, p.79.
89 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.53, Wellington to Beresford, Celorico, 5 May 1810.
90 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.60, Wellington to Stuart, Celorico, 11 May 1810.
91 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.477–78, Observations on Mr Secretary Canning's Dispatch of the 12 August to Marquis Wellesley, Badajoz, 5 September 1809.
92 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.711, Wellington to J Murray Esq, Commissary General, Viseu, 30 January 1810.
93 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.56–57, Wellington to Lieutenant General Hill, Celorico, 8 May 1810.
94 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.464–68, Wellington to Marquis Wellesley, Merida, 1 September 1809.
95 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.449–54, Wellington to Viscount Castlereagh, Merida, 25 August 1809.

The Navy

The role of the Royal Navy is often overlooked in histories of the campaign of 1810. Although the Royal Navy did not have an offensive role, the campaign could not have been undertaken without its ships and transports, and the control of the seas. It was ready to support, supply and, if necessary, remove the army from Portugal. The Royal Navy provided the vital communication link back to Britain and also to other parts of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as securing the Tagus and the seaward side of the defensive lines around Lisbon. The historian De Toy wrote of the Vice Admiral Berkeley and the Royal Navy,

> … the Shipment of 47 large ship cargoes of grain from American ports that provided essential food for not only the allied armies but also the entire increased population of the Lisbon environs during that long winter … nearly every man, horse, mule, musket, cannon, uniform, shoe, powder barrel and, not least, shilling and pound, arrived and departed from Portugal in his ships or in convoys protected by his ships. Fresh supplies and reinforcements were brought in and sick and wounded and prisoners were taken out.[96]

Vice Admiral Berkley was made an admiral in the Portuguese navy on 24 May 1810, and appointed the commander-in-chief of naval forces stationed in Portugal.[97] Relations between Berkeley and Wellington were very cordial, and in June 1810 Wellington wrote to Berkeley asking for assistance from the Navy to set up the telegraph system, and to provide gun boats for the Tagus.[98] Berkeley responded by sending 12 officers and 36 men to work the telegraph,[99] and also requested additional rations to be provided by Wellington for the seamen operating the telegraphs. Wellington, in what appears to be a somewhat piqued letter, wrote back, '… If you should still be of opinion that the additional rations, or an allowance instead of them, must be made, they shall be made, subject to a reference to England, or I will try to arrange to manage our signals without the assistance of these officers and men'.[100]

Wellington continued by asking Berkeley to consider the problems this might cause in the future.[101] According to Fletcher, Berkeley intended to withdraw the ratings and officers from the telegraph stations, which meant that, '… Lord Wellington thinks we had better use the simple Portuguese telegraph …'.[102] Such a disagreement, on the eve of the French invasion, seems somewhat ridiculous. It appears that the problem was resolved, for a General Order was issued in October 1810 which read:

96 Brian De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', in *A Guerra Peninsular: Perspectivas Multidisciplinares Actas* (Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópio, 2008), p.414.

97 Soriano, *Historia Da Guerra Civil*, Vol.V, Part II, pp.90–91.

98 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.120, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Celorico, 15 June 1810.

99 De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', p.416.

100 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.255, Wellington to Berkeley, Celorico, 3 September 1810.

101 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.255, Wellington to Berkeley, Celorico, 3 September 1810.

102 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.233, Gouvea, 11 September 1810.

> When any Officer is desirous of communicating a message to the Commander of the Forces, it is only necessary to send it to the nearest telegraph, and to request the Officer of the Navy at that telegraph, to communicate it to the Sobral station, Head Quarters: in the same manner, messages may be communicated to any other station [in the lines].[103]

This exchange of letters did not seem to cause any lasting difficulties for the two men, and the telegraph continued to be operated by Berkeley's men.

The Royal Navy equipped and prepared gunboats for use in the Tagus, protecting the flank of the defensive lines, and also preventing French attempts to cross the river. 'Frigates were stationed at particular points on the River to communicate between the Army and Lisbon, and a Body of Seamen landed under Naval Officers to work the guns on the Advanced Posts of the Lines at Alhandra'.[104] A bridge of boats was transported up the Tagus by the Navy as the army advanced in pursuit of the retreating French so that communications could be maintained between Beresford's force in Alentejo and Wellington's advancing army.[105] Finally, the Royal Navy was an essential part of what would have been the last act of the campaign, had it not gone to plan. Preparation for the embarkation of the army consumed a large amount of Wellington's time in late 1809 and 1810, and Berkeley was confident of the provision of the necessary transports and protection, should it become necessary.[106]

103 Gurwood (ed.), *General Orders*, p.264, General Order, 13 October 1810, Telegraph (In the Lines).

104 De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', p.416; Untitled Account by Admiral George Cranfield Berkeley of the role of his Royal Navy Squadron in the Peninsular War, (written autumn 1811).

105 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.655, Wellington to Beresford, Cartaxo, 6 March 1811, 4:00 a.m., & Santarem, 6 March 1811, 4:00 p.m.; De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', pp.417–18.

106 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.789, Wellington to Berkeley, Viseu, 21 March 1810; De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', p.416.

6

1810

The year 1810 began with a series of French victories in the south of Spain culminating with the capture of Seville. Hoping to take advantage of the improvements in French fortune and the collapse of Spanish morale, Soult wrote to Ney inviting him, by the orders of King Joseph, to invest Ciudad Rodrigo with the support of *Général de Division* Kellermann.[1] The implication of Soult's message was that the town would surrender at the first summons, and without a fight. Ney concentrated his corps quickly and attempted to take Ciudad Rodrigo by a *coup-de-main*. The governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, *Teniente General* Perez de Herrasti wrote to Brigadier General Cox at Almeida declaring, '… I have sworn the defence of this place for its legitimate sovereign …'[2] Ney summoned the fortress to surrender on 12 February, but was refused. Herrasti replied to the summons by saying he was sworn to defend the town, and would do so, '… until the last drop of my blood'.[3] After a brief cannonade of the town by Ney's artillery, and a vigorous reply from the defenders' guns, it became clear that the town was not ready to capitulate. Ney gave the order to retire from Ciudad Rodrigo on the 13th, and by 16 February he was back in Salamanca, with his corps dispersed between that town, Ledesma and Vitigudino. The advance to Ciudad Rodrigo had been a failure, it had used scarce resources and achieved little except a drop in morale of VI Corps.

Towards the end of February 1810 Napoleon sent an Imperial order preparing units for the forthcoming campaign in Portugal. VIII Corps was to move its headquarters to Valladolid and occupy the province of Leon. Loison's division was to move to Salamanca to facilitate communications between VIII and VI Corps, and Kellermann was to send his division of dragoons there. Marshal Ney was instructed to occupy the pass between Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo and to send out cavalry patrols to discover the enemy positions. Napoleon

1 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.211–12; Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.290–91.

2 TNA, PRO 30/43/51, Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole: Papers, 'Extract of letter forwarded by Captain Ellis to General Cole, Almeida, 12 February 1810, 4 O'Clock pm'.

3 Andrés Pérez de Herrasti, *Relación Histórica y Circunstanciada de Los Sucesos Del Sitio de La Plaza de Ciudad Rodrigo En El Año 1810, Hasta Su Rendición Al Exército Francés Mandado Por El Príncipe de Essling El 10 de Julio Del Mismo* (Madrid: Repullés, 1814), p.77, Herrasti to Ney, 12 February 1810.

also enquired if it would be possible to have a thousand horses move ammunition from Burgos to Salamanca via Valladolid in preparation for the coming sieges.[4]

In response to reports that Allied troops had been sent south to divert Soult from his operations in Andalusia, Loison was ordered to probe the Allied picquets around Barba del Puerco and below the bridge over the Agueda.[5] If possible, he was to push the enemy outposts back to Almeida. Loison attacked on 19 March and succeeded in taking a few prisoners, who reported the location of allied units around Guarda, Pinhel, Almeida, and Ciudad Rodrigo, with headquarters at Viseu. According to these prisoners, the apparent movement of allied troops was simply the normal rotation of units, the main army being still in place opposite the French.

At the end of April Wellington moved his army closer to the Portuguese border, to concentrate it in preparation for the expected invasion. The 1st Division went to Celorico along with the army headquarters, the 3rd Division was at Pinhel and the 4th and 5th around Guarda.[6] Hill's corps remained further to the south around Castello Branco.[7] Craufurd's Light Division had been positioned in contact with the French on the Spanish-Portuguese border, spread around Gallegos, covering the main routes between the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida. The cavalry of the 16th Light Dragoons and 1st KGL Hussars were posted to the north of Craufurd, extending as far as the bridge at Barba del Puerco.[8] This concentration of forces caused problems, as Wellington wrote,

> The enemy's movements upon the frontier have induced me to concentrate the allied armies in a greater degree than they had been hitherto; and of course the subsistence of the troops, in a country already in some degree exhausted, becomes a subject of some difficulty and arrangement. This difficulty is easily to be overcome, in consequence of the measures which had been previously adopted. There are not less than one million of rations belonging to the British army, and 300,000 belonging to the Portuguese army, on the Douro and the Mondego, within 14 leagues of the army. There are not less than 40,000 carts, with bullocks, in the different districts of this part of Beira; and yet a sufficient number cannot be got for the public service upon this emergency, to move up the magazines to the army.[9]

Wellington had previously issued orders that all the carts and wagons in the country were to be registered with the *Capitãos Mors*, so that they could be employed by the army in just such a duty.[10] The problem of insufficient numbers of wagons and draught animals was to

4 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, pp.205–9, 16245, Napoleon au Berthier, Paris, 12 February 1810.

5 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.304.

6 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.32, Wellington to Lieutenant General Hill, Viseu, 27 April 1810.

7 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.22.

8 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.149, Memorandum for Major Generals Picton and Cole, and Brigadier General Craufurd, Celorico, 28 May 1810.

9 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.42–43, Wellington to Stuart, Celorico, 1 May 1810.

10 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, pp.756–58, Wellington to Lieutenant General Bacellar, Governor of the Province of Beira, Confidential memorandum, 1 March 1810.

trouble Wellington, both during the retreat from the frontier and in the days during his pursuit of the French in early 1811.

Through his network of spies Wellington learned that Massena had been appointed to command the *Armée de Portugal*. He received an intercepted copy of the Order of the Day from Valladolid, dated 21 May and signed by *Général de Brigade* Fririon, chief of staff of the *Armée de Portugal*, confirming the establishment of the army: 'It is reported at Valladolid that Massena is coming to command the army to be employed against this country, and that a Gen. Lamartiniere is coming with 20,000 more men'.[11] D'Urban wrote on 19 May that, 'Massena has been put in orders as Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Portugal … This is the best General France has; Bonaparte thinks the Defenders of Portugal of some consequence or he would not send him'.[12] On arrival in Valladolid on 10 May, Massena had received letters from his three corps commanders congratulating him on his appointment and assuring him of their dedication.[13] However, discord was evident between the commander in chief and his immediate subordinates from the very beginning. Massena had told Napoleon that one reason for his reluctance to take command was the character of his Corps commanders. 'He had heard of the difficult character of the Duke of Elchingen, and The Duke d'Abrantes' vanity was proverbial'.[14] Foy wrote, 'Our army of Portugal seethes with discordant elements. Ney is anxious to get moving, but never obeys orders and is always lacking in respect … Junot, rightly demoted to third place … heartily hopes the campaign will prove a failure … Reynier plays straight but the Prince dislikes him'.[15]

Another source of friction between Massena and his subordinates, if the gossip is to be believed, is the presence with the army of his mistress, '… a young and pretty woman disguised as a dragoon captain …'.[16] His corps commanders saw this as one more example of Massena's weakness on campaign, and was subsequently to lead to increasing criticism of his behaviour. According to Ney's biographer Bonnal, 'The impression that Massena produced on Marshal Ney was deplorable, in that, either through carelessness or intellectual and physical deterioration, he did not seem interested in anything'.[17] These proud officers were used to taking orders only from Napoleon and this, Massena believed, would impede his ability to command such men, but Napoleon had reassured Massena that his authority would be absolute.

The disagreement and unwillingness to cooperate extended to Massena's divisional and brigade commanders. Some units would go so far as to seize the stores of others and keep them for themselves. Loison's troops had gathered a large store of food at Zamora, only to have *Général de Brigade* Taupin snatch them.[18] Other marshals and generals in Spain who had been instructed by Napoleon to assist Massena during the invasion failed to cooperate

11 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.61, Wellington to the Right Honourable H. Wellesley, Celorico, 11 May 1810.
12 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.106.
13 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.25.
14 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.7.
15 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, p.101.
16 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.321; Marbot, *The Memoirs of Baron de Marbot*, Vol.2, pp.106–7.
17 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.321.
18 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.332–35.

with his plans, effectively leaving the *Armée de Portugal* on its own.[19] *Généraux de Division* Kellermann and Seras were combined as a reserve for Massena to be concentrated around Valladolid, but it is clear that neither Kellermann nor Seras ever responded actively to any requests from Massena for support.[20] Direct orders from Napoleon would be necessary before the other generals and Marshals would move to Massena's aid, but by then it would be too late.

Before the invasion of Portugal could be undertaken, following the plan dictated to Massena by Napoleon, two fortresses would need to be captured. On the Spanish side of the border was Ciudad Rodrigo commanded by *Teniente General* Andrés Pérez de Herrasti, supported by the *Junta* of Ciudad Rodrigo. Mirroring it on the Portuguese side was Almeida, commanded by Brigadier General Cox, a British officer in Portuguese service. Wellington had identified the importance of Ciudad Rodrigo to the allies in a letter to Marquis Wellesley in 1809:

> Your Excellency has observed that Soult entertains a design of attacking Ciudad Rodrigo: which design, I understand, was discussed and recommended by a council of war held some time ago at Salamanca. The success of this enterprise would do more mischief than the French are capable of doing in any other manner. It would completely cut off the only communication the Spanish government have with the northern provinces; would give the French the possession of Castille [*sic*], and would most probably occasion the loss of the Portuguese fort of Almeida.[21]

For reasons of subsistence, by the second half of May Massena's corps had been dispersed, with II Corps around Merida to the south and VI Corps in the vicinity of Ciudad Rodrigo. VIII Corps was strung out between Leon and the area around Salamanca.[22] Massena had to delay the final concentration of his forces to the last moment for fear of using up all his supplies and denuding the area on the frontier which he knew would need to provide for the sieges to come. He had received clear orders from Napoleon which said that he must take care and be as systematic in his advance as possible. Those orders read, 'The summer must be spent in taking Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida; the campaign must be managed methodically and not by disconnected expeditions'.[23] The timing would then allow Massena's forces to make the most of the summer harvest as they advanced into the depths of Portugal.

However, a disconnected expedition was exactly what Ney proposed to his new commander. He wanted to cover Ciudad Rodrigo with a single division and march into Portugal to attack Wellington. Ney wanted to move immediately, masking Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and advance on Viseu, drawing the Allied army into battle.[24] He repeated this

19 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.552, 16732, Napoleon au Massena, Paris, 29 July 1810.

20 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, 1866, Vol.20, pp.386–87, 16519, Napoleon au Berthier, Le Havre, 29 May 1810.

21 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.467, Wellington to Marquis Wellesley, Merida, 1 September 1809.

22 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.15.

23 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, p.385, 16519, Napoleon au Berthier, 29 May 1810.

24 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.319–20, Rapport du maréchal Ney au prince d'Essling, expédié le 10 mai 1810 de Salamanque à destination de Valladolid; Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.31.

idea to Massena several times, and complained that he received no reply. As a consequence of the lack of orders and the exhaustion of supplies, Ney told Massena he would have to move his troops back from Ciudad Rodrigo to their old cantonments.[25] Massena had clear orders from Napoleon to advance methodically, which meant that Ciudad Rodrigo would be subjected to a formal siege rather than simply masked. It is not clear whether Massena chose to share with his subordinates the instructions he had received from Napoleon, and this may have been the cause of some of the friction between them. He replied to Ney that he was not used to being addressed in such a manner, and that the siege would progress by his timetable.[26]

The Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo

Ciudad Rodrigo was fortified under Ferdinand II in the 12th century to protect the main northern road from Portugal into Spain, and is situated on a plain on the bank of the River Agueda. The fortress was armed with 100 cannon and 18 howitzers, and amongst the garrison were the regiments of Mallorca, Segovia, and Avila numbering 1,874 men, along with three battalions of volunteers from Ciudad Rodrigo, numbering 2,422 men.[27] With other irregular troops, and the artillerymen manning the guns, the garrison of the town was in excess of 6,000 men.

Ney's VI Corps was given the task of taking the town but the preparations for the siege were considerable. Tens of thousands of sandbags and gabions needed to be made, guns mounted and ammunition supplied, food prepared and stocked. The siege train was to be brought from Bayonne to Salamanca and then on eventually to San Muñoz.[28] The allies had news of the arrival of the siege train, as Brigadier General Cox reported, 'A very intelligent man who left Salamanca a few days ago, and who arrived here yesterday, confirms the account that a number of pieces of heavy artillery had arrived there lately … 5 mortars, 4 24 pdrs, 8 18 pdrs and the rest are of different calibres which he could not exactly ascertain'.[29]

The French advanced to surround Ciudad Rodrigo on 25 April 1810, establishing a partial blockade, but it was only fully invested at the end of May.[30] Ney, continually working against difficulties of supply and provisions, required nearly three months to make the necessary preparations.[31] The lack of suitable construction materials was to afflict the French in their sieges, as well as in the broader campaign. Ney had assembled the artillery and other materiel for the siege at Salamanca, but was delayed getting them to Ciudad Rodrigo. Inclement weather made moving the heavy siege artillery particularly difficult as the unmetalled roads dissolved into mud when heavy carriages were used.[32] In preparation for the construc-

25 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.321–22.
26 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.322, Massena to Ney, Valladolid, 21 May 1810.
27 Pérez de Herrasti, *Relación Histórica*, pp.14–15.
28 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.14.
29 TNA, PRO 30/43/51, Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole: Papers, Cox to Cole, Almeida, 10 March 1810.
30 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.32, Wellington to Hill, Viseu, 27 April 1810; Horward, *Napoleon and Iberia*, pp.43–44.
31 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.213.
32 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.213.

tion of the siege batteries, the French moved ten 24-pounders, seven 16-pounders, twelve 12-pounders, eleven mortars and eight howitzers from Salamanca to San Muñoz.[33] According to a letter sent by Massena to Berthier, the rain had not stopped since the beginning of May and the roads were so bad it took twelve horses to move a single 24-pounder artillery piece. He complained of the lack of food and resources available to him, that the vicinity, '… is but a desert for thirty leagues around Rodrigo'.[34] Pelet also noted that,

> The transportation equipment of the 8th Corps was placed at the disposition of the 6th Corps. Nevertheless, the roads … dissolved by the continuous rains, were in such a terrible state that the first convoy of artillery, which left Salamanca on 29 May for San Muñoz, where the parc was provisionally established, did not arrive there until June 4 – taking six and one half days to travel twelve leagues [36 miles].[35]

Tools were still in short supply and needed to be collected from the immediate vicinity or transported from Salamanca; initially the engineers had only their ready-use tools to hand.[36]

Friction continued between Massena and Ney during the siege, with Ney disobeying orders, and Massena interfering in Ney's tactical control. As *Général de Division* Lazowski, Massena's commander of engineers, had not yet arrived, Ney's commander of engineers Couche and commander of artillery Ruty, planned the preparations for the siege. However, progress was not as fast as Massena wanted, so, '… he renewed his order that Colonel Valazé take command of the works; he gave General Éblé the specific task of supervising the batteries …'.[37] Some authors have referred to a letter of complaint supposedly written by Ney around this time, published in the Duchess d'Abrantes' memoires,[38] which displayed a level of insubordination Massena would not have been able to tolerate.[39] Both Belmas and Horward consider the letter to be a fake.[40] However, the problems between the two Marshals of France were real and impeding the smooth operations of the army. Pelet remarked, 'We had made a mistake when we began our siege so poorly … Henceforth it became necessary to entreat the Prince to maintain as much moderation as firmness in his relations with [Ney], for under the circumstances he truly had reason to complain about him. Disagreement was apparent on every occasion'.[41]

Ney's troops were deployed around the city, with cavalry patrols over the Agueda to watch the movements of the Allied army.[42] Wellington was aware of the movements of the French

33 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.223.
34 SHD, 7C8, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance', 1810, Massena au Berthier, Salamanca, 5 June 1810.
35 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.48.
36 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.224.
37 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.68.
38 Laure Junot, *Mémoires de Madame La Duchesse d'Abrantès, Ou Souvenirs Historiques Sur Napoléon, La Révolution, Le Directoire, Le Consulat, l'empire et La Restauration* (Paris: Chez Ladvocat, 1832), Vol.13 pp.86–91.
39 David Buttery, *Wellington Against Massena: The Third Invasion of Portugal, 1810-1811* (Barnsley, England: Pen & Sword Military, 2007), p.68; Humble, *Napoleon's Peninsular Marshals*, pp.130–31.
40 Horward, *Napoleon and Iberia*, pp.348–49.
41 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.68–69.
42 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.217.

army, and received reports regularly of their operations.[43] In response to a request for help from Herrasti, Wellington wrote to Cox on 1 May regarding Ciudad Rodrigo that, 'If the [French] force near Ciudad Rodrigo is only 4000 men, and the Governor wishes to remove them, he is surely able to effect that operation himself. Why are the English to undertake it?'[44] Wellington reminded Herrasti that, '… the protection of [Ciudad Rodrigo] is not the only object intrusted to me …'[45] According to his own memoires, Herrasti had over 6,000 men as garrison for the town, and was able to mount spoiling attacks against the French. *Général de Division* Mermet summoned Herrasti to surrender the town on the 12th May, but was refused, and Herrasti bravely replied that any negotiations would now be made only with cannon.[46] The garrison made several spoiling attacks on the developing French siege works, and the Allied outposts were constantly observing the progress of the siege. A bridge was constructed by the French across the Agueda below Ciudad Rodrigo near the convent of La Caridad, with defensive works thrown up on the opposite bank to protect it. A second trestle bridge was built north of the town, at Loro, which enabled Marchand's and part of Mermet's division and Lamotte's cavalry brigade to operate on the left bank of the river, to interfere with allied reconnaissance, and observe the movements of the Allied army.[47]

Junot was ordered to bring his Corps up to support the siege operations of VI Corps, with Clausel's division as far forward as San Felices el Chico. Lagrange's division would maintain communications through Tamames to Salamanca.[48] Pelet reported that at the same time,

> The Prince sent his aide-de-camps … to reconnoiter the country situated between the road from Salamanca to Ciudad Rodrigo and the Duero, and the road from Zamora to Toro. We were in effect without maps, since that of Lopéz, in spite of its large scale, was poorly marked … The two aides-de-camp were to bring back a written reconnaissance of information on the defence and occupation of the country, to make the needed corrections on the Lopéz map.[49]

Although the expectation on both the Allied and French sides was that Wellington would attempt to relieve the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, his real intentions were less clear. He had written to Beresford that, 'The attempt to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo is a measure deserving of serious consideration; as, in effecting it, we must use the magazine in Almeida, and that place must then fall immediately'.[50] His reluctance to commit the army in the plains around

43 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.103–5 Wellington to Hill, Celorico, 5 June 1810; Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Celorico, 6 June 1810.

44 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.41, Wellington to Cox, Celorico, 1 May 1810.

45 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.55, Wellington to Don Andreas Herrasti, Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, Celorico, 7 May 1810.

46 Pérez de Herrasti, *Relación Histórica*, pp.18–19.

47 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.217–21.

48 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.280–81, Lettre du maréchal Masséna, prince d'Essling, au général, Junot, duc d'Abrantès, commandant le huitième corps, Salamanque, 9 June 1810.

49 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.55.

50 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.734, Wellington to Marshal Beresford, Espinhal, 15 Feburary 1810; See also ibid., Vol.3, p.769, Wellington to Craufurd, Viseu, 8 March 1810.

the town was made clear on several occasions, despite his statements of support to Herrasti.[51] Wellington wrote again on 11 June that he could not relieve Ciudad Rodrigo:

> Having obliged the French to collect an army for this enterprise, that is, to make the attack of the worst fortified place in the world, I felt that I can do no more for it. I think that I might have delayed still longer the complete investment of the place, and the chances of war and the chapter of accidents, which in these days are not allowed to be counted for anything, might have enabled me to prevent the siege altogether if the Government possessed any strength or desire to have anything done but what is safe and cheap. But with an army considerably inferior in numbers ....and the enemy being ... superior in cavalry, I think I ought not risk a general action in the plains to relieve the place.[52]

This opinion was echoed in a letter home from Guards officer John Aitchison who wrote, 'The country between Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida is open and flat. Lord Wellington says the French are so powerful in cavalry that we cannot venture out'.[53] Napoleon had written to Massena in May that, '… the English general, as he has less than 3000 horse, may wait for the attack in a country where cavalry is useless, but will never offer battle in a plain'.[54]

It was during the investment of Ciudad Rodrigo that Napoleon dictated dispatches to Massena which instructed him how the campaign was to unfold, and told him what troops he would have to execute it and he was told that Reynier's II Corps would be attached to the *Armée de Portugal*.[55] This meant that he would have, '… under his command seven infantry divisions, 54,000 strong, and 11,000 cavalry, which will make an army of from 65,000 to 70,000 men'.[56] Massena was therefore given an army much reduced from the one Napoleon had promised him before he left Paris, and which was already suffering greatly from the weather and lack of supplies.

Ney directed the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo and the first parallel trench was opened on the night of 15-16 June by 2,500 soldiers working approximately 500 metres from the city on the heights of the Grand Teson. The next night a decoy attack was made to the northeast of the town to mask the sound of digging in the rocky ground. By the morning a thousand yards of trenches had been opened along with communication trenches.[57] Bad weather dogged the excavations and meant trenches became flooded, and the engineers struggled to maintain progress in the sodden ground.[58]

51 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.55, Wellington to Don Andreas Herrasti, Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, Celorico, 7 May 1810.

52 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.114–15, Wellington to the Right Hon. Henry Wellesley, Celorico 11 June.

53 Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p.101, Celorico, 20 June 1810.

54 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, p.123, Napoleon au Berthier, Havre, 29 May 1810.

55 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.10, p.378, 16504, Napoleon to Berthier, Dieppe, 27 May 1810.

56 Anon. (ed.), *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol.2, pp.123–25, Napoleon au Berthier, Havre, 29 May 1810.

57 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.343–44.

58 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.226.

On 25 June there was an explosion at Ciudad Rodrigo, the noise reportedly heard at Almeida, 20 miles away.[59] Marshall-Cornwall suggests that it was the main powder magazine inside the town, although Belmas records 9,000lbs of powder for number 4 and 5 siege batteries exploding on the French side, killing and wounding 100 men, similar to the events which Herrasti also noted.[60] Burgoyne reports on the 26th that, having heard loud explosions on the 25th, the, '… explosions yesterday said to be in the French lines'.[61] Had the main powder magazine for the town exploded it is likely that Wellington would have received reports, as he had regular communication with the town, even going so far as taking a look for himself from the advanced allied positions. Herrasti sent a man to Wellington on the 26th, reporting 150 dead and 500 wounded, but without reporting a large explosion.[62] Wellington confirms his knowledge of the French magazines' explosion in a letter to the Earl of Liverpool on 4 July, but there is no mention of the town's magazine having been destroyed.[63]

On 1 July the second parallel was opened and by this time the French cannonade of the town had set much of it alight. Massena wrote to Ney with intelligence of Wellington's dispositions: the Allied outposts were on the Azaba; Craufurd was at Gallegos with between seven and eight thousand men; the rest of the Allied army was in the vicinity of Almeida. He also wrote to Berthier that, 'I am closely blocking Ciudad Rodrigo, and I am able to receive the English if they come to help this place, which I do not believe they dare do'.[64] By 9 July a large practicable breach had been opened in the walls, and preparations were made to storm the town. On 10 July at 3:00 a.m. *Capitaine* Coffinal of the French engineers detonated a mine under the defences, which destroyed the counterscarp and filled the moat with rubble.[65] This was to be the final part of the preparations for the assault. Herrasti decided that the time for capitulation had come, and he sent a deputation to the French to sue for terms. In a letter to Ney he wrote, '… after having fulfilled … all my duties as a soldier, I am ready to surrender …'[66] Herrasti met Ney at the foot of the breach, and despite an attempt to delay the inevitable agreed that the garrison would lay down its arms.[67] Although the city was not subject to an assault, and was thus spared the horrors which usually accompanied one, the officers of Loison's division had great difficulty in preventing their soldiers from plundering the town.[68] The news of the fall was quickly passed to the Allies. Governor Cox wrote on 11 July, 'I am requested by B. Genl. Craufurd to acquaint you with the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo: he has been informed by two french [sic] officers who were taken Prisoners

59 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.139, Wellington to Craufurd, Almeida, 25 June 1810, 4:30 p.m.; Marshall-Cornwall, *Marshal Massena*, p.191.

60 Marshall-Cornwall, *Marshal Massena*, p.191; Pérez de Herrasti, *Relación Histórica*, p.42; Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.233.

61 Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, Vol.1, p.87.

62 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.142, Wellington to H. Wellesley, Almeida, 28 June 1810; Pérez de Herrasti, *Relación Histórica*.

63 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.150, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Alverca, 4 July 1810.

64 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.21.

65 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.254; Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.77.

66 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.296, Pieces Justificatives No 17.

67 Pérez de Herrasti, *Relación Histórica*, pp.54–55; Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.352.

68 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.82; Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.352.

this morning, that the place was enter'd [sic] by the french [sic] troops at 6 o'clock yesterday evening'.[69]

The siege had lasted only twenty-four days; not as long as Wellington had hoped. He wrote, '... I consider the defence to have been most honourable ... I have been most anxiously desirous to relieve the place since it had been attacked; and have been prevented ... only by the certainty which I had that the attempt must fail'.[70] This contrasted with the earlier assurances given to Herrasti, something upon which he commented in a letter to the Spanish Minister of War. Herrasti felt he had been let down by the inactivity of his allies despite offering a long and stubborn resistance, '… during so long a siege, [the defenders] were obliged to surrender without receiving any help'.[71] Wellington was convinced that an attempt to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo would fail due to the French preponderance in cavalry. Wellington's cavalry would have been seriously outnumbered in the ideal cavalry ground of the plains around the towns. This contradicts some historians' views that Wellington was committed to relieving the fortresses if they came under siege, and even some of Wellington's more public comments about relief.[72] For political purposes, Wellington had appeared eager to provide relief for the Ciudad Rodrigo, but was reluctant to risk his army for what might be only temporary relief at best, or a disastrous defeat at worst.

The siege indicated to Massena the problems of supplying his army, which would only increase in the coming campaign. On 2 July he had written to Ney, 'We have a lot of trouble with food, especially because of the lack of transportation. There are no horses or carts in the region; we must move everything here ourselves, and it takes three days for the convoys to arrive from Salamanca'.[73] There was nothing for the senior French officers to do but make the best preparations they could, and follow Napoleon's orders.

The time between the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida was taken up with a constant bickering between the outposts of the armies, and manoeuvring between the Anglo-Portuguese and French armies. This provided two occasions that Craufurd's Light Division fought substantial actions with the French, losing men and, had it not been for the stubbornness of the allied troops, losing nearly the entire division.

69 TNA, PRO 30/43/51, Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole: Papers, Cox to Brigadier General Campbell, Almeida 11 July 1810.
70 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.161, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Alverca, 11 July 1810.
71 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.318.
72 Horward, *Napoleon and Iberia*, pp.39–40.
73 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.21.

7

The Prince Never Had a Single Guide

Concepción and The Coa

Between the surrender of Ciudad Rodrigo on 10 July, and the push towards Almeida beginning on the 21st, the French army sent out patrols and strong reconnaissance forces, both to keep an eye on the Allies and to forage for supplies. Massena had ordered Junot to send a strong reconnaissance of, '… General St. Croix, or such other general as you may deem fit, with six or eight hundred horses, and artillery if you think it necessary, with the order to … know positively where the English army is …'[1] This reconnaissance met the rearguard of the Allies at Gallegos, where a spirited skirmish developed between the cavalry of the two armies. Under pressure from the advancing French troops, Craufurd moved the Light Division back over the Dos Casas, moving past the fort at La Concepción. Allied picquets were left on the west bank of the Dos Casas, maintaining contact with the enemy. However, concerns had already been raised about the security of the rear-guard. Scovell had previously recorded in his diary that Wellington reconnoitred the enemy positions about '3 ½ leagues [from Ciudad Rodrigo] … The position of the Light Brigade by no means secure. The Country in the Rear Completely open … the enemy very strong in cavalry'.[2]

Massena was preparing his army for the next step of the campaign which would involve the reduction of the fortress of Almeida. Only then could he pursue the great objective of occupying Lisbon. The siege of Ciudad Rodrigo had had two negative effects on the French: it had demonstrated the difficulties of providing for their forces even the most basic of needs when remaining concentrated in the same place for any length of time; and the surrender of the fortress had denied the French troops the chance of plunder, and they had fallen into apathy, '… as a result of the delays in the works of the last siege, the inclement weather, the lack of food, and finally of having been denied the prize which they believed legitimately belonged to them'.[3] The capture of Ciudad Rodrigo had exhausted not only the troops involved, but their supplies of food, and the necessary tools were again in short supply. The stores captured in the town were of little compensation for the effort involved, barely able to feed VI Corps alone. Ciudad Rodrigo had to be put into a state of defence, and the French

1 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.295, Pieces Justificatives No 16.
2 TNA, WO 37/7a, Scovell, 'Diary of the Campaigns of 1809 and 1810', p.83, 26 June 1810.
3 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.89.

troops were put to work rebuilding the breached wall and defences. The siege train needed to be restocked with ammunition and replacement guns ready to be moved to Almeida, but, '… there were no more than twenty-five thousand projectiles, lead, and powder for the attack of Almeida, and these supplies could only be brought from France, more than a hundred and fifty leagues distant'.[4]

The French continued to probe the allied lines, whilst also foraging for supplies, falling into something of a routine which was noted by the Allied outposts. On 11 July Craufurd was engaged in a skirmish with French troops about the villages of Cesmiro and Villa de Puerco.[5] He intended to disrupt the French foraging party which regularly moved into the area to search for food.[6] A bitter skirmish developed involving detachments of allied cavalry, notably squadrons of the 16th Light Dragoons, 14th Light Dragoons and some of the 1st KGL Hussars under Captain Krauchenberg. These were supported by the 3° Caçadores and companies of the 1/43rd, 1/52nd, and 1/95th, opposed by a battalion from the 22e Ligne of Godart's brigade, along with a troop of dragoons. In attempting to pursue a small detachment of the French dragoons, the allied cavalry came upon the French infantry, hidden by high standing corn, who had formed quickly into square. The cavalry charged the square, but with little effect other than the loss of several men and horses, including Colonel Talbot of the 14th Light Dragoons.[7] The French infantry made good use of temporary confusion in the Allied command and retired to Sexmiro. Hulot remarked, '… I saw the trophies of that intrepid company of the 22nd regiment of infantry of the line, commanded by Captain Gouache. Most French muskets were cut by English swords. This example proves what can be done against cavalry by seasoned infantry …'.[8]

The fight cost Craufurd nine killed, 22 wounded and one missing, and drew criticism from fellow officers. Tomkinson wrote in his diary, '… never was a business so badly managed. In the first place, had we shown our force, their infantry would have laid down their arms; but from the hurry and confusion in which we attacked, had they surrendered, we must have ridden over them'.[9] There were accusations made about the supposedly poor performance of the 16th Light Dragoons, into which Cotton was prepared to start an investigation. Wellington persuaded him that the 16th had performed well, by all accounts, and that an investigation was not necessary.[10] Controversy continued to surround Craufurd's actions. This would not be the last time that he risked his troops unnecessarily in battle. However, Craufurd had the temperament that ideally suited the more dangerous command of rear- or advanced-guard forces, and Wellington would be slow to criticise him even when he had disobeyed a direct order from his commander.

The French army now began to push forward from Ciudad Rodrigo towards the Portuguese border in some strength. On the morning of 14 July VI Corps moved to occupy

4 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.334.

5 SHD, 7C8, 'Armée de Portugal, 7C8'; Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.107.

6 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.164–65, Craufurd to Wellington, Valde la Mula, 12 July 1810.

7 Edward Charles Cocks (ed. Julia V. Page), *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula: Letters and Diaries of Major the Hon. Edward Charles Cocks, 1786-1812* (Tunbridge Wells: Spellmount Ltd, 1986), p.64.

8 Hulot, *Souvenirs Militaires Du Baron Hulot, Général d'Artillerie, 1773-1843*, p.308.

9 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.31.

10 Mary Viscountess Combermere and Captain W. W. Knollys, *Memoirs and Correspondence of Field-Marshal Viscount Combermere,* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1866), Vol.1, pp.142–51.

The entrance to the fort at La Concepción. (Photo by Lucy Bamford)

the right bank of the Azaba, between Aldea Nova de Azaba and Marialba, supported by the cavalry reserve. Loison's division reached Gallegos, with his advanced troops reaching the fort at La Concepción, halfway between Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, where they met the Allied outposts.[11] On the same day July Massena had ordered Junot's VIII Corps to occupy a line from Ledesma to San Felices el Chico to support the operations of the II and VI Corps.[12] Solignac's division moved its right to Ledesma, and the left to Vitigudino, and placed an intermediate post at Puente de Yecla; Clausel moved his right to San Felices de los Gallegos, his left to San Felices el Chico.[13]

La Concepción, a small fortress of good construction, stood between Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida. Wellington had issued orders for its repair, requesting troops from Almeida to be employed in building up the breaches in its defences.[14] He had sent orders to the commander of the fort that supplies, weapons and ammunition was on its way to La Concepción, and that he must, '… defend the place to the last extremity'.[15] The fort was to receive 12,000 rations

11 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.355.

12 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.23.

13 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.107.

14 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.89, Memorandum for the Brigadier General Cox, Governor of Almeida, for Fort Concepcion, Celorico, 27 May 1810.

15 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.90, Wellington to the officer commanding the troops at La Concepción, Celorico, 28 May 1810.

from Almeida, and 100,000 rounds of musket ammunition. However, orders changed and Burgoyne, who had been responsible for the repairs to La Concepción, now had orders to destroy it, and had several shafts dug and filled with explosives. Warre commented on this as being, '… a thousand pities. I never saw a more complete or perfect fortification …'[16] On 17 July Burgoyne had finally been instructed by Wellington through Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher to destroy La Concepción at the first sight of an enemy advance in force, and to retire with the cavalry.[17] Wellington explained to Craufurd,

> I have occupied Concepcion with a view to be enabled to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo, and to cover your retreat upon Almeida, if you should be obliged to withdraw ; at the same time that we are prepared for the evacuation and effectual destruction of that fort, if we should be obliged to withdraw entirely from the frontier. From the enemy's strength in our front, of which we have now a positive knowledge, it is almost certain that if you are obliged to withdraw from your position at Gallegos, it will be useless to hold Concepcion. All the preparations are made for destroying the fort …[18]

Ney ordered Loison to advance to the plateau around La Concepción for a reconnaissance in force. Loison therefore assembled three thousand infantry, light cavalry and several pieces of artillery for the action.[19] As these cavalry and infantry were observed advancing on La Concepción on the morning of the 21st by a patrol of the 14th Light Dragoons, Burgoyne set to work lighting the fuses to the mines. He wrote, 'Captain Mulcaster … went up to warn me to light them, but it was already done … he looked into one of the passages and saw the portfire burning … he made off as fast as he could …'.[20] The subsequent explosion killed and wounded some of the Allied rearguard of the 14th Light Dragoons, and disinterred the body of Colonel Talbot who had been buried on the glacis of the fortress.[21] La Concepción was sufficiently damaged in the blast to make it unusable as a fortress by the enemy.

Loison's troops and Craufurd's forces were now engaged in a running battle, across the Tourões and through Vale da Mula. The Allied troops were forced back over the Rio Seco, and were pursued until mid-morning, with Craufurd's units pushed back to the glacis of Almeida. Loison consolidated his position during the rest of the day, withdrawing his forces along the line of the Tourões river, and remained in control of La Concepción and the surrounding villages.[22] Massena now encouraged Ney to push forward on Almeida, in the hope that the Allies would abandon the town and blow up the defences, as had occurred at La Concepción. He wrote to Ney, 'I therefore desire that you have General Loison supported by other troops in order to press the enemy at Almeida. We will have success, I do not

16 Warre, *Letters*, p.141.
17 Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, Vol.1, p.93.
18 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.125, Wellington to Brigadier General Craufurd, Celorico, 19 June 1810.
19 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.375–76, Rapport du maréchal Masséna, prince d'Essling, au prince Berthier, major général, Salamanque, 29 July 1810.
20 Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, Vol.1, p.94.
21 Combermere and Knollys, *Memoirs and Correspondence of Field-Marshal Viscount Combermere*, Vol.1, p.155.
22 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.356, Ney to Massena, 21st July 1810; Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.376–77.

doubt. Do not give them time to change their mind. The arrival of the 2nd corps will alarm them; you should take advantage …'[23] On receiving this letter, Ney immediately left Ciudad Rodrigo and moved to take direct command of his forces.

On the morning of 42 July Craufurd's Light Division was deployed outside Almeida, with the left flank near the fortress and the right resting on the village of Junça.[24] Craufurd's left flank was near a windmill 800 yards from Almeida, enabling the troops to take advantage of the stone-walled enclosures around it as a defensive position.[25] From here, the left flank could be covered by the guns of the fortress, as well as two guns placed near the windmill itself. However, over all the position was unfavourable, as Craufurd had his back to the river, and only a single narrow bridge over which to cross. Wellington was always aware of the possibilities of Craufurd becoming cut off on the eastern side of the Coa, and repeatedly warned him against becoming involved in an engagement the wrong side of the river. He explicitly informed Craufurd in a despatch dated 22 July that, '... I am not desirous of engaging in an affair beyond the Coa'.[26]

Général de Brigade Lamotte's light cavalry led the French advance, preceded by the Chasseurs du Siege and followed by Gardanne's brigade of dragoons. Loison's division led the main body of the infantry, supported by Mermet's division and then Marchand's.[27] Ney began probing the allied positions and realised that he was facing a force much weaker than his corps.[28] Ney's cavalry attacked the allied left flank, near the windmill, where the Allied cavalry and the 1/43rd were posted, and Ferey's brigade attacked the Allied right flank in an attempt to cut the Light Division off from the Coa.[29] Simmons recalled, 'The enemy now advanced in vast bodies. The whole plain in our front was covered with horse and foot advancing towards us. The enemy's infantry formed line and, with an innumerable multitude of skirmishers, attacked us fiercely …'.[30] As the attack developed, Craufurd realised the superiority of the enemy's numbers. The baggage, artillery and cavalry were ordered to retire across the river, covered by the infantry.[31] A near disaster occurred when an ammunition wagon of Ross's RHA Troop overturned on the narrow road to the bridge, effectively blocking the only escape route for the remaining troops, '… but by the exertions of McDonald and Bourchier, it was safe got off'.[32]

Craufurd's infantry now fought a desperate, disconnected, rearguard action. At some stages during the battle, the command structure of the brigades and battalions broke down,

23 SHD, 7C20, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance', 1810; Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.356, Massena au Ney, Salamanca, 22 July 1810.

24 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.184, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Alverca, 25 July 1810.

25 Thomas Garrety, *Memoirs of a Sergeant, Late in the Forty-Third Light Infantry Regiment during the Peninsular War* (London: John Mason, 1835), p.91.

26 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.79, Wellington to Brigadier General Craufurd, Alverca, 22 July 1810.

27 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.357–59, Au bivouac près d'Almeida, le 24 juillet, 2 heures de l'après-midi, au prince d'Essling.

28 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.375–80, Pieces Justificatives No 5, Rapport du maréchal Masséna, prince d'Essling, au prince Berthier, major général, Salamanque, 29 July 1810.

29 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.357–59, Au bivouac pres d'Almeida, 24 July, 2:00 p.m.

30 Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, pp.76–77.

31 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.185, Craufurd to Wellington, Carvalhal, 25 July 1810; Sir William Napier, *The Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles James Napier, G. C. B.* (London: John Murray, 1857), p.137.

32 Quoted in Lipscombe, *Wellington's Guns*, p.125.

The outer entrance to the defences at Almeida. (Author's photo)

Almeida's defences viewed from the French positions South West of the town. (Author's photo)

The eastern ditch and defensive walls at Almeida. (Author's photo)

The track leading from Almeida to the bridge over the Coa along which Craufurd's men retreated. (Author's photo)

with individual companies of Allied soldiers fighting alone, or mixed with other regiments: '… every Captain carried off his company as an independent body, the whole presenting a mass of skirmishers …'[33] Charles Napier wrote, 'The 52nd were followed over the bridge by the 43rd and 95th, and Cazadores [*sic*], covered by three companies of the 43rd, Dalyel's, Lloyd's, and my brother William's …'.[34] Several artillery pieces were set up on the left bank to cover the retreat. It was reported that the 1° Caçadores fled across the bridge in disorder, and following an inquiry into their behaviour, Wellington wrote, '… there appears to have been some grounds for the complaints made of the conduct of the Caçadores in the premature and accelerated passage of the river by some of them …'[35] However, Wellington conceded that overall, given the orders they had received, the 1° Caçadores performed satisfactorily. Several soldiers recall fighting hand-to-hand with enemy dragoons and hussars, mixed together, whilst attempting to make good their retreat.[36] Had Ney been able to use large bodies of formed cavalry, the small bands of allied soldiers would have been extremely vulnerable, but the ground around Almeida towards the Coa is broken by stone walls and small enclosures, even today. Ney commented in his report to Massena, '… the terrain was so difficult that it was impossible for the bulk of our cavalry to take part in the action'.[37] After vicious and confused close-quarter fighting in which a number of the allied troops were sabred or captured, the Light Division finally made its way across the bridge.

Ney became overconfident however, and after Craufurd had got the last of his troops across the Coa he tried to force the bridge with columns of infantry, suffering serious casualties in the process. Troops from the 1/95th and 1/43rd established themselves on a rocky knoll on the opposite bank of the river which gave them a clear view of the bridge. From here they fired down into the massed ranks of the French trying to force their way across. Allied artillery was also established facing the bridge, enabling destructive fire to be added to the musketry of the infantry. Captain Jenkinson of the Royal Horse Artillery recorded, 'As soon as we had crossed the bridge we pushed up the hill, and found the most delightful position for our guns … we then opened fire upon their advancing infantry with spherical case, which cut them up …'.[38]

The French tried several times to carry the bridge, but without success. Sprünglin wrote,

> At noon I received the order from Marshal Ney himself to carry the Coa bridge at all costs, whence two companies of grenadiers had just been repulsed … I went there quickly, collected the two companies of grenadiers, formed my battalion in column, and approached the English with the bayonet and the cry of Vive l'Empereur! … I had 4 officers and 86 soldiers killed, and 3 officers and 144 wounded.[39]

33 Garrety, *Memoirs*, p.92.
34 Napier, *The Life and Opinions of General Sir Charles James Napier*, p.138.
35 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.192–93, Wellington to Marshal Beresford, Celorico, 29 July 1810.
36 Edward Costello, *The Adventures of a Soldier; or, Memoirs of Edward Costello* (London: Henry Coulburn, 1841), p.57; Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p.77.
37 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.357–59, Au bivouac pres d'Almeida, 24 July, 2:00 p.m.
38 Quoted in Lipscombe, *Wellington's Guns*, p.125.
39 Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs', pp.439–40.

The rebuilt bridge crossing the Coa over which Craufurd's men retreated. The hill in the background was where the Light Division took up defensive positions to repel the French attempts to seize the bridge. (Author's photo)

Simmons recalled,

> A number of French officers and some drummers headed the storming party. Our fellows allowed them to come close to the bridge. Some officers got over before they fell, but few went back to tell the tale, either men or officers. They attempted to force the bridge several times before the evening, and finding it impossible to effect their purpose, they made a signal to cease firing. An officer came forward waving a white handkerchief and requested to be allowed to remove their wounded, as the bridge and its vicinity were covered with their killed and wounded.[40]

Firing died down after another downpour of rain, and as the evening descended the Light Division withdrew to Carvalhal.[41] Craufurd listed his losses as 36 killed, 199 wounded and 83 missing.[42] Half a company of the 1/52nd had been cut off in the windmill during the battle, and, waiting for nightfall, made their way back to the allied lines.[43]

40 Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, pp.79–80.
41 Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p.80.
42 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.185, Craufurd to Wellington, Carvalhal, 25 July 1810.
43 William Moorsom, *Historical Record of the Fifty-Second Regiment (Oxfordshire Light Infantry)* 2nd ed. (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1860), p.122.

An incident occurred during the fighting at the Coa that showed the Allied command was subject to the same type of friction which had been seen in the French. During the battle on the Coa, Picton rode up from Pinhel to view the situation at Almeida, when Craufurd asked him for support from the 3rd Division. There was a brief but animated exchange between the two generals, described by Brigade Major William Campbell as, '… upon Craufurd's asking inquiringly whether General Picton did not consider it advisable to move out something from Pinhel in demonstration of support, or to cover the Light Division, in terms not bland, the General (Picton) made it understood that "he should do no such thing". This, as you may suppose, put an end to the meeting …'.[44]

Picton left and returned to Pinhel. Wellington had written several times to the generals, indicating that, '… the divisions of Gen. Cole and Gen. Picton should support [Craufurd] on the Coa, without waiting for orders from me, should it be necessary; and they shall be directed accordingly'.[45] Picton was aware of his orders to remain in communication with Craufurd's Division. He wrote to Craufurd on 4 July, '… I have also to request as early information as possible of your movements, that I may be enabled to co-operate with them, in obedience to his Excellency the commander of the Forces instructions of the 2nd instant'.[46] However, Wellingtons subsequent orders of 2 July do not include instructions for Picton to support Craufurd in any action, merely to indicate to Craufurd an attempt by the enemy to outflank his position in front of Almeida.[47] Picton perhaps took the orders of 2 July too literally during the battle on the 24th.

The action on the Coa drew criticism from the serving officers. Aitchison of the Guards wrote to his father, 'As I have not heard every particular … I have not pronounced any opinion on it – all reports however blame General Craufurd for having most unnecessarily exposed his men and this is said to be in contradiction of the orders of Lord W. …'[48] Wellington was subsequently to write to his brother,

> Although I shall be hanged for them, you may be very certain that not only I have had nothing to do with, but had positively forbidden, the foolish affairs in which Craufurd involved his out posts. Of the first, indeed, in which Talbot was killed, I knew nothing before it happened. In respect to the last, that of the 24th, I had positively desired him not to engage in any affair on the other side of the Coa ; and as soon as La Concepcion was blown up on the 21st, I had expressed my wish that he should withdraw his infantry to the left of the river ; and I repeated my injunction that he should not engage in an affair on the right of the river in answer to a letter in which he told me that he thought the cavalry could not remain there without the infantry. After all this he remained above two hours on his ground after the enemy

44 Alexander Craufurd, *General Craufurd and His Light Division, with Many Anecdotes, a Paper and Letters by Sir John Moore, and Also Letters from the Right Hon. W. Windham, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Londonderry, and Others* (London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden & Welsh, 1891), p.115.

45 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.769, Wellington to Craufurd, Viseu, 8 March 1810.

46 Craufurd, *General Craufurd and His Light Division*, p.121, Picton to Craufurd, Pinhel, 4 July 1810.

47 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.147–48, Memorandum for Major Gens. Picton, Cole and Slade; Brig. Gens. Campbell and Craufurd, Alverca, 2 July 1810.

48 Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, pp.105–6, Macal do Chao, 25 July 1810.

> appeared in his front before they attacked him, during which time he might have retired across the Coa twice over, where he would have been in a situation in which he could not have been attacked.
>
> You will say, if this be the case, why not accuse Craufurd? I answer, because, if I am to be hanged for it, I cannot accuse a man who I believe has meant well, and whose error is one of judgment, and not of intention ; and indeed I must add that although my errors, and those of others also, are visited heavily upon me, that is not the way in which any, much less a British army can be commanded.[49]

Similarly, Massena was irritated with Ney for becoming involved in a general action, despite being ordered to avoid one. He had sent an ADC, Pierron, to Ney to order him not to undertake any action around Almeida before he had arrived to assess the situation. When Massena learned from Pelet that Ney had fought a battle, 'He was very angry, but fortunately we were able to stop the Prince at Ciudad Rodrigo and prevent an altercation between the two great men'.[50] Rather than a reconnaissance in force using Loison's formations, Ney had thrown an entire *corps d'armée* at the Allies, and had pushed too hard once the Allies were safely across the bridge. Massena was unhappy that such a risk had been taken, but Pelet and Fririon acted as go-betweens to smooth relations between Ney and Massena.[51]

Neither Wellington nor Massena had wanted, or expected, a general action. Conscious of the risk of losing a substantial part of their army if the battle was unsuccessful, warnings had been given to the local commanders. However, both Ney and Craufurd were aggressive commanders who would not shy away from a fight.

The final retreat of the Light Division over the Coa meant Almeida was now exposed to the advancing French, and would inevitably be subjected to a siege. An advanced guard made up of Ferey's brigade of infantry, consisting of the 32e Légère, 66e Ligne and 82e Ligne, and Lamotte's light cavalry brigade of the 3e Hussards and 15e Chasseurs a Cheval, pushed over the Coa and advanced on Pinhel.[52]

Preparations to remove all supplies were now to be put into motion: Wellington wrote to Lieutenant General Sir Stapleton Cotton, 'Send round to the people that they must retire from the villages, and let the magistrates know that if any of them stay, or if any of the inhabitants have any communication with the enemy, they shall be hanged'.[53] However, tensions between the remaining local inhabitants and the Allied army increased. Relations between the advanced posts of the Anglo-Portuguese army and the local Portuguese peasants descended into violence, with swift retribution by the army. Cocks reported on 1 August, '… two of my patrols were attacked in two separate villages, a man of each is badly wounded. I immediately visited each village with a party, seized some of the inhabitants whom I considered as culprits and have sent them on to General Cole at Guarda'.[54]

49 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.561–64, Wellington to William Wellesley-Pole, Celorico, 31 July 1810.

50 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.90.

51 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.91.

52 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.337.

53 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.204, Wellington to Cotton, Celorico, 4 August 1810.

54 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.71.

Wellington wrote to Cotton about the misbehaviour of some of the allied soldiers, 'There is really no excuse for a soldier in the service of Great Britain plundering; and I shall be obliged to you if you will talk seriously to [Lieutenant Colonel Frederick von] Arentschildt [commanding officer of the 1st KGL Hussars] upon the subject, and point out to him how unfortunate it would be if this conduct, which can be of advantage to nobody, should deprive his regiment of the reputation which they have acquired'.[55]

Almeida

Almeida was constructed around a medieval castle, and surrounded by star shaped, low defences in the Vauban style.[56] Basic information about Almeida was lacking before the French army arrived at its gates. Surprisingly, there existed no drawing of the fortress in the papers of the army. The Marquis d'Alorna, who had been responsible for this part of the Portuguese frontier, had been stationed at Almeida for some time previously. However, when questioned about the defences, his answers were wrong, including incorrectly enumerating the number of bastions in the fortresses defences as seven. French reconnaissance quickly proved that only six existed.[57] This was a portent of the quality of information the French could expect from d'Alorna and the other *afrancesados*. Everyone on the allied side hoped for a long drawn out siege as the fortress had been well stocked with provisions and ammunition, and the garrison numbered 4,500 Portuguese regulars and militia under the command of the British Brigadier General Cox.

There were shortages of almost everything the French needed for the second siege. The commander of the engineers, *Général de Division* Lazowski, had trouble collecting sufficient tools and equipment for his men. To overcome this shortage, he ordered 6,000 tools and 20 caissons to be made in Bayonne, but the lack of funds prevented their manufacture.[58] Massena wrote to Berthier, 'We are having a hard time getting enough food in Ciudad Rodrigo to work on investing Almeida, difficulties which will delay this essential operation for the siege. The harvest is not yet in; and what is most embarrassing for us is that we do not have transportation: the Intendant General does what he can, but we do not have the means'.[59]

The Allied picquets were kept busy chasing French soldiers and cavalry from foraging duties, with Cocks reporting French dragoons carrying large trusses of straw or hay back to their lines. The picquets also destroyed mills which the French were using to grind the grain they had been able to harvest.[60]

55 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.209–10, Wellington to Cotton, Celorico, 6 August 1810.
56 João Campos, *Almeida: Três Pontas Notáveis Numa Estrela Singular* (Almeida: Câmara Municipal, 2010).
57 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal,* pp.94–95.
58 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.340.
59 *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.369–70, Lettre du maréchal Masséna, prince d'Essling, au prince Berthier, major général, Salamanque, 17 July 1810.
60 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.36; Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, pp.72–73.

On 28 July, Marshal Massena visited Almeida accompanied by Marshal Ney, and *Généraux de Division* Éblé and Lazowski, to reconnoitre the fortress defences.[61] Lazowski and Éblé agreed that the point of attack would be the bastion of São Pedro. Despite Almeida being surrounded, Massena informed Berthier that the first trenches could not be opened until the middle of August at the earliest because of the lack of essential supplies.[62] On 15 August digging began, slowly but methodically. The fortress was sited on a rocky plateau, which made the job of trench digging extremely laborious and sometimes dangerous. The engineers could not obtain the materials necessary to construct the fascines and gabions essential to protect the labourers employed in this work. Digging at night would be revealed by sparks from the metal pickaxe heads on stone, bringing fire down from the fortress. Where the rock was difficult to cut with pickaxes, gunpowder was used to blow the boulders from the ground.[63] Sprünglin recorded, 'Blocks of granite obstructed [the trenches]; it was only by long and painful work that they were able to extract them'.[64]

Once the investment of Almeida was complete, Massena sent out strong reconnaissance forces over the Coa to secure the front against the Allied army, collect supplies, and learn the enemy's positions. To this end, Lamotte advanced to Pinhel with the light cavalry and two infantry battalions, and cavalry patrol were pushed as far as the vicinity of Guarda, Póvoa d'El-Rei, and Celorico.[65] Wellington was concerned that the French would mask Almeida, '… as soon as they shall have got together their force, they will make a dash at us, and endeavor [sic] to make our retreat as difficult as possible. I therefore propose, in the morning, to make such a disposition of the army as to insure that point'.[66]

The preparations Wellington made he described to Charles Stuart;

> The enemy's operations against Almeida are so very feeble, and their intentions so little distinct, and the intelligence which we receive has been lately so very bad, that I have thought it advisable to draw in the whole left of the army to the valley of the Mondego, holding Guarda still with a division of infantry, and the ground in front of Freixedas, &c., with our cavalry only. In this position I am equally prepared for any operation that it might be in my power to undertake for the relief of Almeida, if it should be attacked ; and better prepared for our retreat, if that should be necessary.[67]

These dispositions meant that in addition to investing Almeida, Massena was forced to keep a strong force to face the Allied army, in the event Wellington chose to intervene. But, on this occasion, as he feared, Wellington's intelligence had let him down. The French army was in no condition to rush the Allies and force a battle. In addition to the problems of

61 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.338.

62 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, pp.381–82, Lettre du maréchal Masséna, prince d'Essling, au prince Berthier, major général, Ciudad-Rodrigo, 10 August 1810.

63 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.110.

64 Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs', p.443.

65 SHD, 7C20, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance'; Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs', p.440; Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.360.

66 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.189–90, Wellington to Hill, Alverca, 27 July 1810.

67 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.192, Wellington to Stuart, Celorico, 29 July 1810.

reconnaissance, transport and supply, Massena was concerned about his lines of communication. He wrote to Berthier on 10 August, 'I beg your Highness not to lose sight of the request I have made to him, to send at least one division to the province of Salamanca, to maintain the communications … since it will be it is impossible to leave any troops of the 6th and 8th corps there, which, moreover, diminish every day because of the diseases caused by excessive heat'.[68]

The plan, created by Napoleon in Paris, was that Drouet with the IX Corps would provide protection for the lines of communication between the *Armée de Portugal* and Spain. In a letter to Massena, Napoleon corrected the conclusion in his own hand to read, 'General Drouet will reach Valladolid on the 1st of September with a corps of infantry and cavalry amounting to 12,000 men, which, joined to the divisions of Seras and Bonnet, will form an army able to hold Galicia in check, and to take possession of it as soon as you have marched on Lisbon, or to keep up your communications'.[69] The vagueness of this arrangement would cause problems for Massena in the coming campaign, and lead to increasing frustration for him.

The preparations for siting the guns to bombard Almeida continued, with Éblé and Lazowski determining the precise position for eleven batteries in front of the first parallel on the morning of 18 August.[70] Fire from the fortress made life difficult for the attackers as they constructed the positions for the guns, with the blocks of rock and springs of water that were found as the trenches were deepened and widened.[71] As a consequence of all the complications, the bombardment did not begin until 6:00 a.m. on the morning of 26 August, when 11 batteries totalling 52 guns opened fire on the town.[72] Houses were set on fire, and soon the gunfire from the fortress was reduced.

Fourteen hours after the bombardment began, the town and the surrounding area was rocked by an explosion which devastated the houses, breached the walls, killed numerous gunners, and blew many of the guns on the defences over the walls. The main powder magazine housed in the medieval castle had exploded, showering large blocks of masonry over a wide area. Wellington wrote, '… I observed, on Monday, that the steeple of the church was destroyed, and many of the houses of the town unroofed'.[73] Despite the extensive damage, Cox was still defiant, and pleaded with his men to allow the siege to continue. They argued successfully against him, and *Major* Barreiros of the artillery, with Pedro de Mello, was sent out to negotiate with Massena's forces. He informed the French of the state of the fortress and never returned. Wellington wrote indignantly, 'Massena has made him a Colonel!'[74]

68 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.381, Pieces Justificatives No 6, Lettre du marechal Massena, prince d'Essling, au prince Berthier, major general, Ciudad Rodrigo, 10 August 1810.

69 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.20, pp.552–53, 16732, au Maréchal Masséna , Prince d'Essling, Commandant l'Armee de Portugal, a Ciudad Rodrigo, Paris, 29 July 1810.

70 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.346.

71 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.350.

72 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.364; Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.353.

73 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.248, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Celorico, 29 August 1810.

74 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.252, Wellington to Stuart, Celorico, 31 August 1810.

Cox finally signed the surrender documents in the evening, after delaying as long as he possibly could.[75] In a letter to Marshal Beresford on 30 August, he wrote,

> The painful task has fallen to my lot of acquainting your Excellency that I was reduced to the necessity of surrendering the fortress of Almeida, which I had the honor [sic] to command, on the 27th inst., at 10 o'clock at night, in consequence of the unfortunate explosion of the great magazine of powder in the castle, and the small magazines contiguous to it, by which dreadful accident I was deprived of the whole of my artillery and musket ammunition, with the exception of a few made-up cartridges which remained in some of the expense magazines on the ramparts, and 39 barrels of powder which were deposited in the laboratory.[76]

The behaviour of some of the Portuguese concerned Wellington and Beresford, with a view to the impending campaign. Wellington wrote to Charles Stuart, '… I am sorry to add that the whole of the 24th [Portuguese] regt., with the exception of the Major and of the English officers, have gone into the French service. It is said that their object is to have an opportunity of deserting from it, which is well enough for the private soldiers, but is highly disgraceful to the character of the officers'.[77]

Whether true or not, the plight of the 24° was a worrying precedent, but Pelet reported that, although the Portuguese troops had taken an oath of obedience and fidelity, half of them deserted with their weapons.[78] Within the town the French found 174 guns and 500,000 rations of biscuit, as well as abundant supplies of rice and wine.[79] The siege had inflicted roughly equal casualties on each side of about 500. Of this total 50 French were killed by the effects of the exploding ammunition in Almeida. Cox himself was to be imprisoned, along with two other 'English' officers, and a watch was to be kept on them, despite their appeal that Massena had promised their return to England.[80]

In response to criticism by the Portuguese Regency Council about the loss of Almeida without any intervention by the Allied army, Wellington wrote that, 'I should forget my duty … if I should permit public clamour or panic to induce me to change, in the smallest degree, the system and plan of operations which I have adopted, after mature consideration, and which daily experience shows to be the only one likely to produce a good end'.[81]

The same thinking would be applied to the overall conduct of the campaign to follow; Wellington had his plan, and was determined to stay with it. The Portuguese Regency Council, on the other hand, wanted to fight a battle to stop the French, regardless of the situation. The disagreements continued between Wellington and the Portuguese Regency

75 Archives Nationales, Paris, 304MI/56, 'Sommation Adressée à Guillaume Cox, Gouverneur d'Almeida, d'avoir à Se Rendre', 27 August 1810; Archives Nationales, Paris, 304MI/56, 'Texte de La Capitulation Pour La Reddition de La Place d'Almeida, Signés Par Masséna et Signé Par Cox', 27 August 1810.

76 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.257–58, Cox to Beresford, Aldea del Obispo, 30 August 1810.

77 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.252, Wellington to Charles Stuart, Celorico, 31 August 1810.

78 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.131.

79 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.32.

80 Picard and Tuetey, *UCN3*, Vol.3, p.860, 4771, Decision, Communications of the Minister of War with H. M. the Emperor and King, dated 28 October 1810.

81 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.261, Wellington to Dom Forjaz, Gouvea, 6 September 1810.

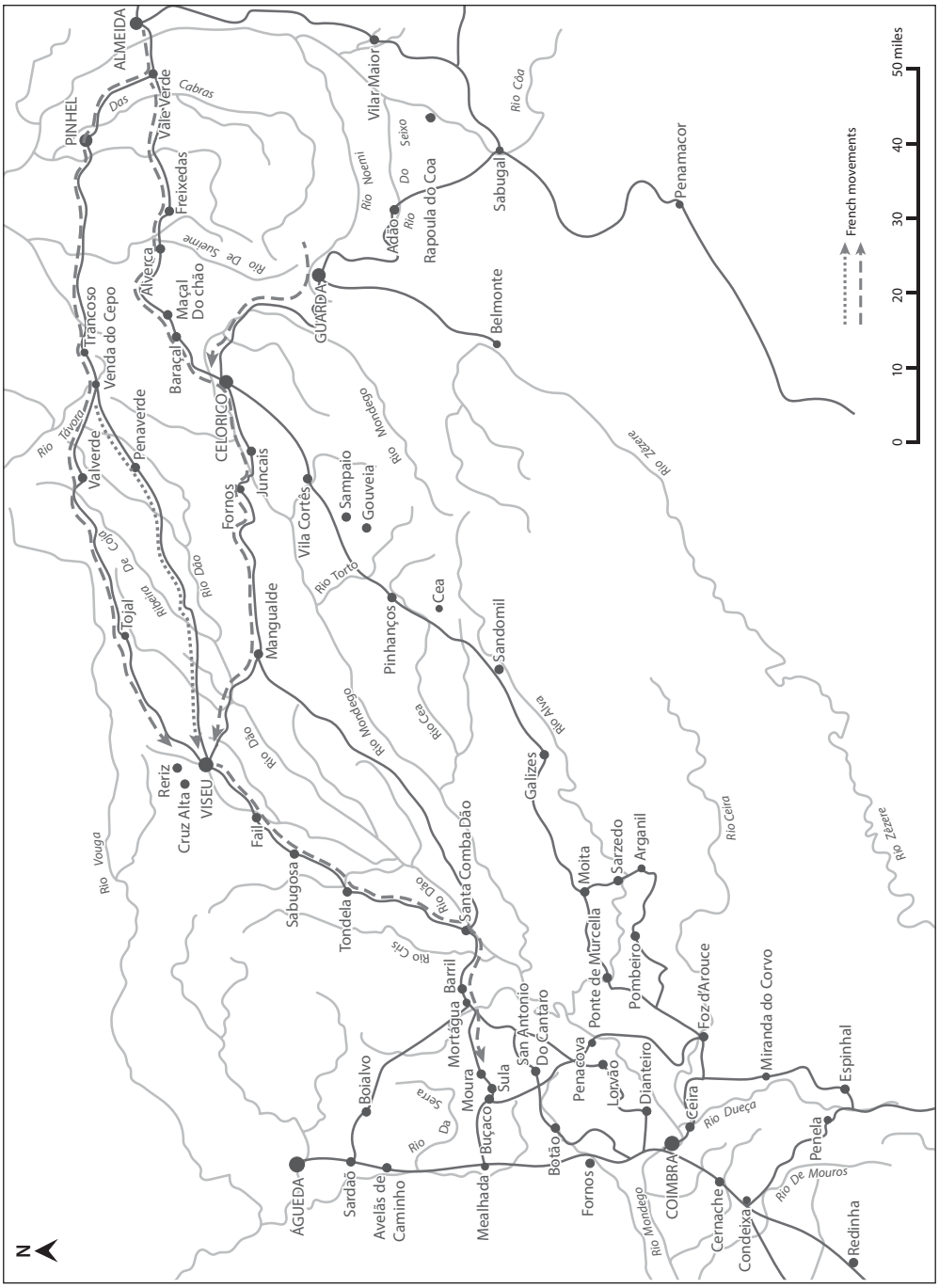
regarding overall conduct of campaign, provoking Wellington to threaten to remove the British army from the country. He wrote, 'I will not lose the only chance which remains of saving the cause, by paying the smallest attention to the senseless suggestions of the Portuguese Government'.[82]

While the differences within the Allied command continued, there was a pause on the part of the French. From the surrender of Almeida to 14 September, Massena struggled with the logistical problems of preparing his army to advance on Lisbon. The garrisons of Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo were provisioned for three months, and Lambert, Massena's Intendant General, worked tirelessly to supply the army with food and other necessities. Meanwhile, *Général de Division* Ruty was having difficulty finding sufficient skilled labour to be able to return the two fortresses to a defensible state in the time available. *Général de Brigade* Brenier, the new governor of Almeida, had problems restoring basic amenities in Almeida after the explosion, most notably finding accommodation for the new garrison.[83] Despite all the difficulties, Massena concentrated his three *corps d'armée* ready for the invasion.

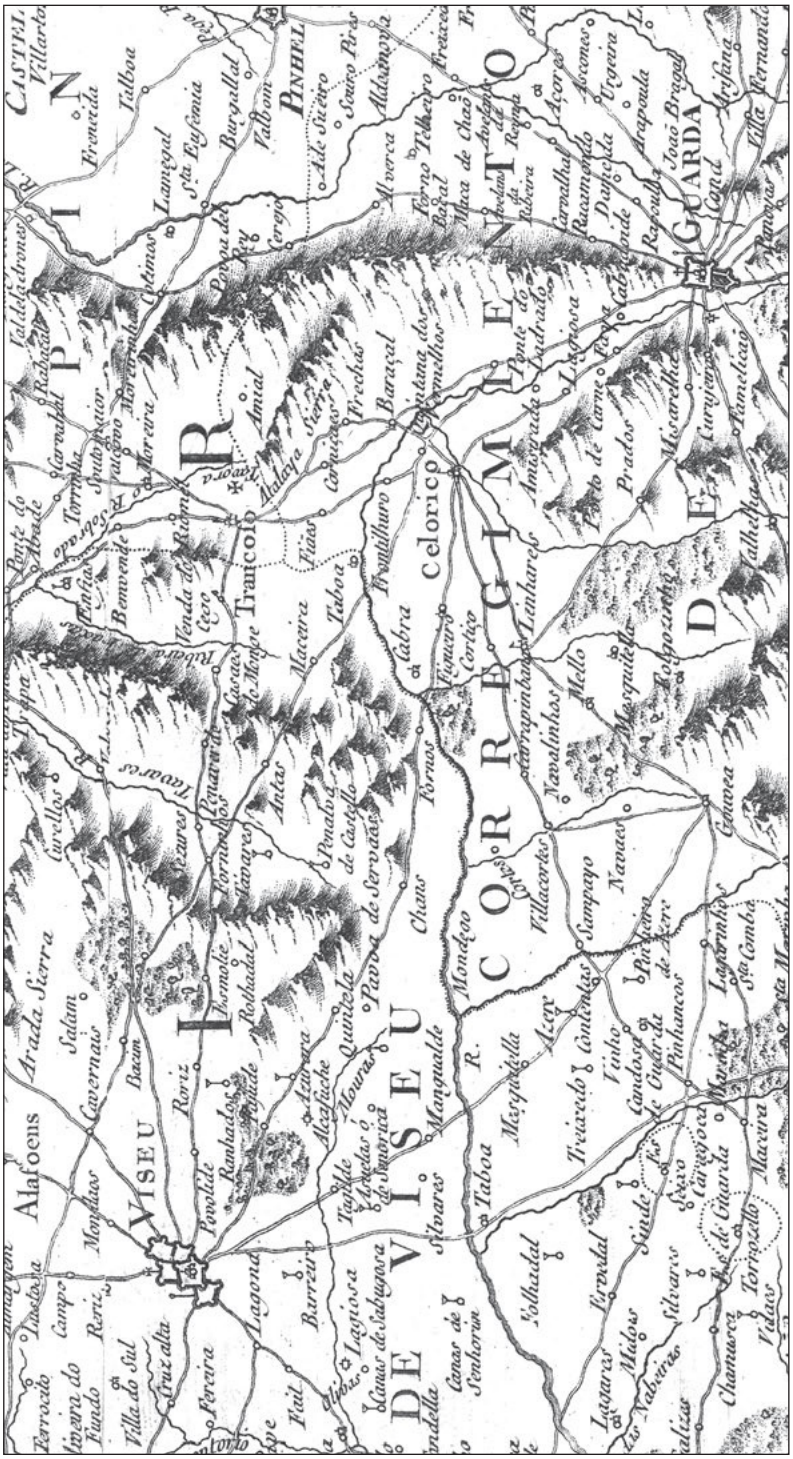
Once an invasion had begun, Wellington had planned the withdrawal of the army along the left bank of the Mondego towards the position at Ponte de Murcella.[84] The roads along this route had been improved and bridges strengthened. The Allied army was now withdrawn along the valley of the Mondego, its forces extending from Celorico to Ponte de Murcella.[85] Hill's corps covered the route into Portugal between the Tagus and the Zezere with Leith acting as a support on the banks of the Zezere toward Thomar. To Pelet, the impression was that Wellington had split his forces, and communication between the two parts seemed to be virtually impossible because of the Serra da Estrella. Thus, Hill's force was almost discounted from the French plans.[86] However, there was regular and frequent communication between Hill and Wellington, and a clear route for Hill to take in the event that Reynier's II Corps was united with the VI and VIII to its north.[87]

Wellington was aware that some of the defensive lines at Lisbon were still incomplete, and delaying the French advance by whatever means would allow his engineers to complete the works, or at least bring them to a stage of preparedness capable of receiving the army.[88] Fletcher had written to Jones after the fall of Almeida informing him of the advance of the French, and ordering the manning of the lines around Lisbon. He also ordered the defences around São Julião to be completed as a priority. Fletcher's tone in one of the letters demonstrates a certain anxiety about making sure bridges are mined and ready for destruction, whether or not that destruction would be beneficial.[89]

82 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.263–64, Wellington to Charles Stuart, Gouvea, 7 September 1810.
83 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.159–60.
84 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.717, Memorandum, left with Lieutenant General Sherbrooke, Viseu, 31 January 1810.
85 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.23.
86 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.150–51.
87 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.252, Wellington to Hill, Celorico, 31 August 1810.
88 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, pp.226–32, Instructions from Fletcher to Jones, Head-Quarters, Celorico, 29 July, 1810.
89 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.231, Fletcher to Jones, Celorico, 31 August 1810.



Map 2 Advance of the French army into Portugal as far as Buçaco.



Map 3 Lopez map showing area of French advance.

There was uncertainty about the forthcoming campaign on both sides. Wellington was secretive about his plans for the campaign because he had to be. He was reluctant to send operational details back to the government in London for fear that they would appear in the newspapers, and the French were gaining much of their intelligence that way. There was a lot of talk in the Allied army about the prospects for the approaching campaign. Dickson wrote in August, 'It is now said that we shall retreat until we come to the Bridge of Murcella four leagues from Coimbra, where it is thought we shall make our first stand'.[90] The works around Lisbon were of such a scale that they were known to many in the army, although the true scale might not be fully realised. Soldiers recorded information about the defensive works, and some write in explicit detail about the operational plans. Aitchison wrote in August, 'It appears to me our retrograde movement towards Lisbon whenever it is made will be slow … we shall retire to Santarem and Leiria and thence to the fortified position of Villa Franca and Torres Vedras'.[91]

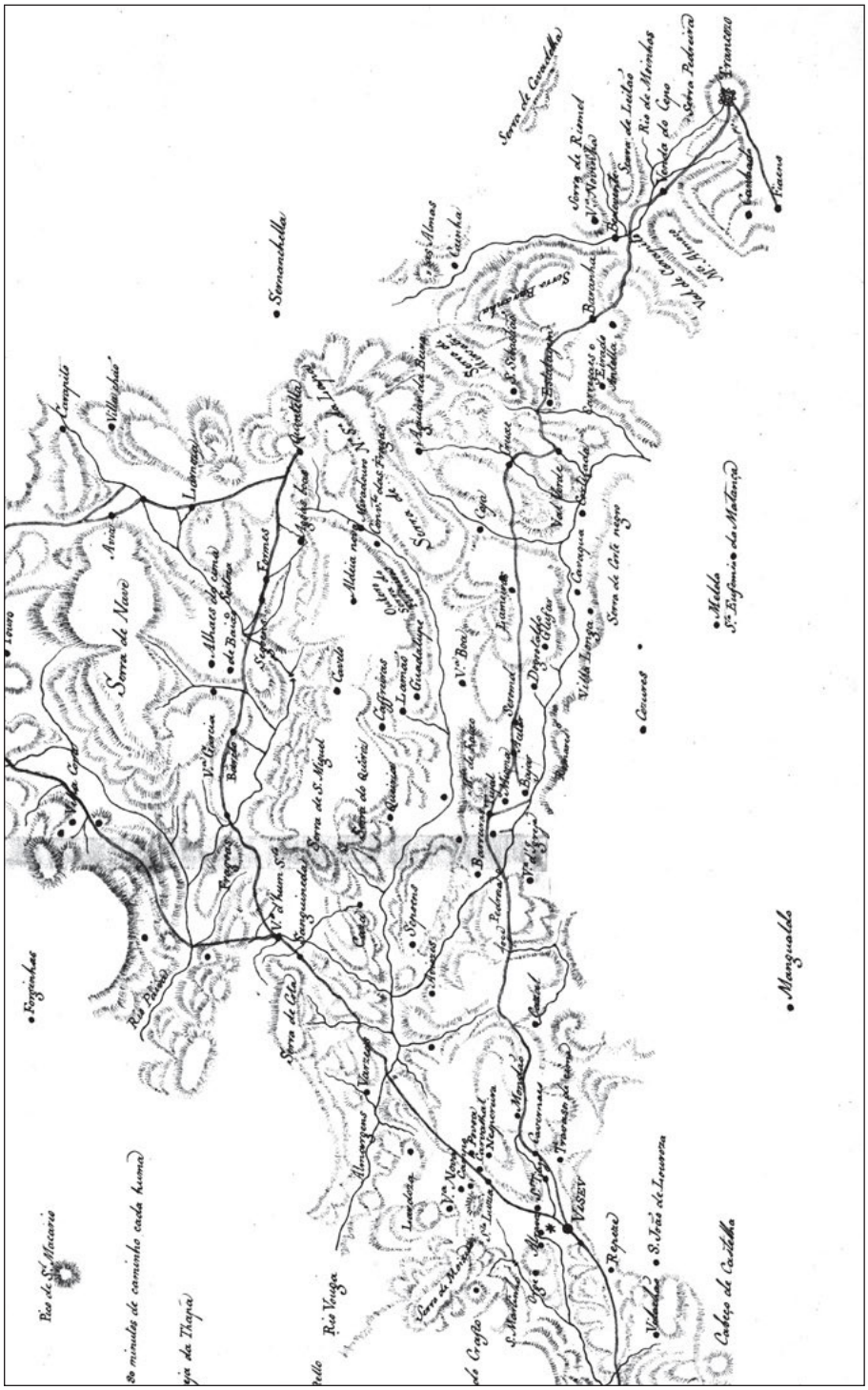
On the French side, there was intelligence about defensive works at Ponte de Murcella, but none about the defences around Lisbon. Massena's plans were dictated by Napoleon, and whether or not he communicated these to his corps commanders, his approach to the coming campaign was to be as methodical as possible, within the logistical limitations he was forced to work under. Detailed orders were drawn up to take the army as far as Viseu, where new orders would be drafted.[92]

The March on Viseu

Massena wrote to Ney on 13 September outlining the initial advance to be made into Portugal beginning on the 15th, which would be made on three separate axes. The advance began with Loison's troops acting as the advanced guard of VI Corps who would proceed towards Freixedas.[93] The rest of VI Corps would advance across the Coa towards Celorico and progress via Fornos and Mangualde, approaching Viseu from the south-east. II Corps would move towards Guarda, pushing in the allied outposts who retired to the area around Celorico and Villa Cortes.[94] Its orders were to move via Fornos to Mangualde.

VIII Corps, with the reserve cavalry and reserve parc following along behind, would advance along the road from Escarigo to Pinhel and would march from there via Venda do Cepo (written as Venda do Lego in the orders) and Tojal to Rariz and Cruz Alta northwest of Viseu, detaching a brigade to go by Penaverde. Rariz has been the cause of confusion in some histories, as there is a village called Roriz to the east of Viseu on a separate route to the one taken by the bulk of VIII Corps.[95] The one intended as the objective of VIII Corps is to

90 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.266, Enclosure, General Order, Celorico, 10 August 1810.
91 Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, pp.108–9, Moimenta, 15 August 1810.
92 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.137–40.
93 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.38.
94 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.39; Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.284, Wellington to Cotton, Gouvea, 14 September 1810, 3:30 p.m.
95 Horward, *The Battle of Bussaco*, p.34; Raeuber, *Renseignements*, pp.76–77.


Serra de Mave
Serra de Gio
Serra de S. Miguel
Serra de Caramulo
Serra de Roimel
Serra de Leitão
Serra Pedroza
Rio de Mouros
Rio Vouga
Rio de S. Macario
Rio Pinhel
Rio Mondego
Rio Alva
Rio Zezere
Rio Tejo
Rio Sever
Rio Ponsul
Rio Ocreza
Rio Zezere
Rio Nabão
Rio Almonda
Rio Sorraia
Rio Tejo
Rio Zezere
Rio Ponsul
Rio Sever
Rio Ocreza

the north-northwest of Viseu near Cruz Alta, and is shown on the Nantiat map as Reris.[96] Thus, what appears to be a direct route for VIII Corps and the reserve would turn into one of the most difficult marches of the campaign.

Much has been made of Massena's choice of roads into Portugal, Wellington commenting at the time that, 'There are certainly many bad roads in Portugal, but the enemy has taken decidedly the worst in the whole Kingdom'.[97] The choice seems to have been based on Napoleon's instructions for a methodical advance into Portugal, coupled with information about defences at Ponte de Murcella, and a lack of intelligence about the true state of the roads. The French would also immediately have begun to see the effects of Wellington's scorched earth policy on the area they were advancing in to. By advancing north of the Mondego, Massena hoped to find resources to support his army until he reached the fertile area around Coimbra. Massena understood that Wellington had constructed defensive works along the left bank of the Mondego and on the Alva, and chose the northern route in order to outflank them. However, there is little evidence to suggest that any defensive works at Ponte de Murcella were built, as some historian believe, and indeed as Napier wrote.[98] Burgoyne wrote extensively in his journal about the preparations to blow the bridges at Ponte de Murcella, Val des Pinos, Foz d'Arouce, and Espinhal amongst others, but does not mention any redoubts or trenches being constructed nearby.[99] He described the position in the neighbourhood of Moita as being an, '… extensive position above Venda de Serra, which consists of a long commanding bare ridge between the Alva and Mondego, a distance of about six miles, each flank falling steep to the deep ravines of those rivers'.[100] He discussed the position at Moita with Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, who decided it was of no use as the armies were collecting to the north of the Mondego. During the French retreat Noël commented that there was a defensive work at the bridge at Ponte de Murcella, but by his description it appears that only the approach to the bridge itself was fortified.[101] Pelet wrote that the intelligence gained about the defences at Ponte de Murcella indicated the position was almost inaccessible.[102] In a footnote, Horward refers to, 'An extensive network of fortifications composed of redoubts and trenches … thrown up at Ponte de Murcella …'[103] and offers several of Wellington's dispatches to support his description, none of which actually make reference to any defensive works at that location. Wellington's orders in January 1810 make no mention of defensive works, but do specify the position at Ponte de Murcella as a position where the army might assemble, '… holding the height of Moita as an advanced post'.[104] Absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of the absence of fortifications. The reporting of 'extensive defensive positions' may have been the result of the work of the

96 Nantiat, 'A New Map of Spain and Portugal'.
97 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.289, Wellington to Charles Stuart, Cortiçó, 18 September 1810.
98 Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula*, Vol.III p.10.
99 Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, Vol.1, pp.97–101.
100 Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, Vol.1, p.107, 17 September 1810.
101 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.116.
102 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.138.
103 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.138.
104 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.718, Memorandum, left with Sherbrooke, Viseu, 31 January 1810.

engineers and *Ordenança* preparing the bridges for destruction and making sections of the roads unusable.[105]

The reason for taking the right bank of the Mondego rested on the supposed defensive position at Ponte de Murcella, but it is doubtful if Lopéz, or Jefferys, or the *Carta Militar* were relied upon to plan the route of advance to the extent that some French writers, such as Pelet and Marbot, claim. Had they been the main maps used for planning the advance, as Pelet certainly says, then the route taken would have been markedly different.[106] The French complaints about the Lopéz and Jefferys maps seem to break down if the line of advance is analysed using those maps. There is no direct line from Pinhel to Viseu via Venda do Cepo but a circuitous route over some mountains marked on the maps, and the marching instructions in the *Dispositions Générales pour l'entree en Portugal* do not make sense if those maps are used.[107] The Lopéz map held in the University of Belfast has the route taken drawn in red ink, but some of the routes taken are drawn where no road is shown, such as between Pinhel and Viseu via Povoa del Rey and Amial.[108] It is apparent from the itinerary maps that other roads and routes were known about before the invasion took place, and were used by the army during its advance. The route taken in the early stages is shown on the *Carta Militar*, but as a path rather than a road.[109] The itinerary map which covers Almeida to Viseu again shows roads which are not on any of the other maps.[110] The route does make sense if one considers other maps possibly available to the French. The route taken by VIII Corps between Venda do Cepo and Viseu follows a road marked on the map *Reconhecimento Militar de Humas Partes Da Provincia Da Beira Feito Em 1801* which is part of the military survey of the province of Beira.[111] The route appears on the map to be a most direct way of moving from Venda do Cepo to Viseu but was actually a quite circuitous route which heads north-west before approaching Viseu from the north-east.

Shadowing the advance of the French, Cocks wrote from a position near Guarda, '… I saw a large force of French cavalry … and still further a column of infantry, marching in file about two miles long … It was clear the enemy was now advancing seriously …'.[112] The pace set for the advance was fast. VI Corps advanced guard was to be at Fornos on the right of the Mondego by the 17th, with the main body at Juncais. By the 19th it was to have reached beyond Viseu, a march of between 70 and 80 miles.[113] Wellington wrote to Lieutenant General Hill on 15 September;

105 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.138.

106 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.135.

107 SHD, 7C9, 'Armée de Portugal, 7C9', Dispositions Générales pour l'entree en Portugal; Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.374–76.

108 Queen's University Belfast, Tomás Lopez de Vargas Machuca, 'Atlas Geográfico de España, Que Comprehende El Mapa General Del Reyno, y Los Particulares de Sus Provincias', 1804.

109 Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, cota CC-1226-R, Homem da Cunha de Eça, 'Carta Militar Das Principaes Estradas de Portugal'.

110 Raeuber, *Renseignements*, p.67.

111 TNA, MPH 1/1007/13, 'Reconhecimento Militar de Humas Partes Da Provincia Da Beira Feito Em 1801', 1801.

112 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.78, 15 September.

113 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.43.

> The enemy have entered the valley of the Mondego in strength, by Guarda and by Marçal do Chao [*sic*]; and I understand that Massena's Head Quarters were to be this day at Pinhel, and to-morrow at Trancoso. If that is the case, it is probable that they will move a considerable column by Viseu, which would turn any position we might take upon the Alva. I do not yet know whether it is Reynier's Corps which has moved into the valley by Guarda, but you will know that to a certainty from Le Cor; and if it should be so, you will of course have carried into execution your orders of the 31st August. [114]

From the first day of the enemy's advance, Wellington's intelligence indicated that at least part of the enemy army would move via Viseu. Hill's orders of 31 August had been to move his forces to Ponte de Murcella via Cabaços and Espinhal if the French army advanced by Guarda into Portugal.[115] By concentrating his forces around Ponte de Murcella Wellington gave himself the option of defending the approaches to Coimbra on either side of the Mondego, and covering the retreat of the army southwards to Lisbon. He provided for a clear path back to the capital along the right bank of the Zezere and Tagus. In anticipation of the planned withdrawal of the army, on the 17 September Wellington had ordered the sick to be removed from Coimbra, and preparations made for the destruction of ammunition and stores there.[116] The allied retreat had been planned and great pains taken to slow the French advance, but most of these referred to action on the left bank of the Mondego, where the French had initially been expected to advance. Bridges were to be destroyed where possible, delaying the wheeled transport if not the infantry and cavalry.[117] Not all were destroyed where severe delays could have been imposed: the bridge at Juncais was intact, and had it been destroyed the, '… abrupt and steep …' banks would have prevented easy movement across the river,[118] but Juncais was not on the long-expected route of advance down the left bank of the Mondego.

On the 16th Ney's advanced guard had reached almost as far as Fornos with the main body around Celorico, whereas it should have been in the area of Alverca. Pelet rode to find Ney to pass on new orders from Massena, only to be delayed by the wagons of the VIII Corps and grand parc still clogging the crossing over the Coa.[119] Massena had sent Pelet with a letter censuring Ney for failing to follow orders, and with instructions that the VI Corps hold its advance.[120] This was an additional source of friction between the two marshals, and according to Pelet, this mistake revealed, '… the goal of the army's operations twenty-four hours too early …' to the enemy.[121] Once the confusion had been corrected, the 17th and 18th saw VI and II Corps cross the Mondego to the right bank, following the road

114 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.281–82, Wellington to Lieutenant General Hill, Gouveia 15 September 1810.
115 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.252, Wellington to Lieutenant General Hill, Celorico, 31 August 1810.
116 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.286, Wellington to Marshal Beresford, Cea, 17 September 1810; see also ibid., Vol.4, p.287, The Adjutant General to Major Marston, AQMG, Coimbra, 17 September 1810.
117 Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, Vol.1, p.108.
118 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.162.
119 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.158.
120 SHD, 7C9, 'Armée de Portugal, 7C9', Massena au Marshal Ney, 16 September 1810; Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.158–59.
121 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.158.

towards Viseu as set out in the *Dispositions Générales*.[122] Some of these roads are not shown on the Lopéz map, so there must have been hard evidence in the French camp for the routes' existence for it to be included in the first marching itinerary. The French advance towards Viseu was dogged by the bad roads, made even worse by the work of the local militia. Pelet described the country beyond Fornos as, '… extremely rough and covered with pine and chestnut trees …'.[123] Guingret wrote, 'We had bad roads during the first four or five days' march, but we saw villages of a much more agreeable aspect than those found in most of the provinces of Spain'.[124]

The actions taken by the Allied army and the civilians as the French approached caused more problems for the advancing French than just broken bridges and roads. On the road to Viseu, Noël wrote that,

> In their retreat, the English had laid waste the countryside, seizing and burning, as the population fled before them; they cut the bridges and destroyed everything that might have been of use to us, furnaces and mills, food and forage. They wanted us to starve, for starvation is a terrible tool of war, one that costs them nothing, and which seemed not to the liking of the Portuguese. From this introduction we learned what lay before us in so devastated a country'.[125]

He would not reach Viseu until the 20th, where he would rest with his artillery company until the 24th. Because of the lack of resistance from the main Anglo-Portuguese army during their advance, many of the French troops were of the opinion that Wellington intended to march south and embark for England, and the campaign would be a repeat of the race to Corunna.[126]

After a relentless but unopposed march, VI Corps reached Viseu on 19 September. That same afternoon Loison's troops of the advanced guard pushed on to Fail on the road to Mortagoa. VI and II Corps pushed on as VIII Corps, artillery and reserve cavalry followed up the rear. On reaching Viseu on 19 September, Guingret took time to admire the architecture and surroundings, but complained, 'Hardly had we met a single Portuguese inhabitant since our departure from Almeida … all fled at the first news of our approach, carrying with them, or destroying before leaving, all that might be useful or necessary for the subsistence of the French army'.[127]

VIII Corps waited in Viseu as the artillery and baggage came straggling in over the next few days.[128] The march on Viseu had not been too hard on the infantry, but the artillery and cavalry had suffered tremendously from the poor quality roads, and required time to catch up and refit.[129] According to Fririon the route from Almeida to Viseu was only 28 leagues,

122 SHD, 7C9, 'Armée de Portugal, 7C9', Dispositions générales pour l'entrée en Portugal.
123 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.163.
124 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, pp.42–43.
125 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.96.
126 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, p.47.
127 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, pp.45–46.
128 Andre Delagrave, *Campagne de l'Armée Française En Portugal, Dans Les Années 1810 et 1811, Avec Un Précis de Celles Qui l'ont Précédée* (Paris: Dentu, 1815), p.56.
129 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.42.

but because of the speed of the march the delay at Viseu was necessary. He complained about the march to Viseu that the roads were so stony that the horses kept throwing shoes'. On broad roads and in an open country, such a movement executed in four days would not have surprised anyone, but in Portugal it could not be so … the army took nine days to complete the movement between Almeida [and Viseu]'.[130] He continued, '19 caissons had been destroyed in Viseu because of the bad roads that had been crossed and for lack of horses to pull them, many of these animals having died of fatigue'.[131] Wellington observed, 'I imagine that Marshal Massena has been misinformed, and has experienced greater difficulties in making his movements than he expected. He has certainly selected one of the worst roads in Portugal for his march'.[132]

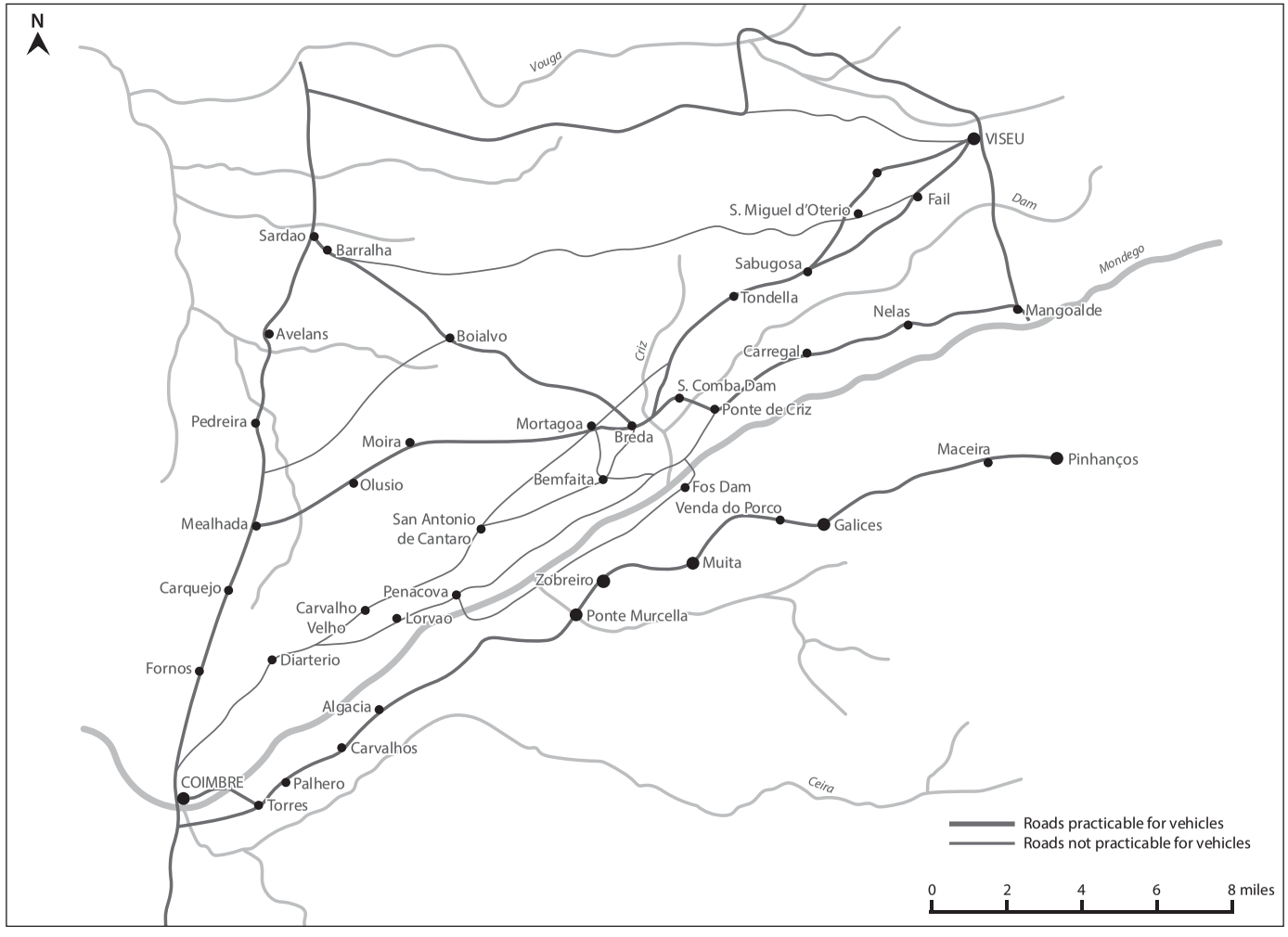
The straggling of the artillery and reserve parc was to cause potentially serious problems for the French army. Their vulnerability was demonstrated when Colonel Nicholas Trant's militia attacked the column on the 20th as it struggled along the road between Trancoso and Viseu via Tojal.[133] The troops which were supposed to be protecting the wagons and guns were some two miles behind the reserve parc when the attack took place.[134] The commander on the spot formed what few troops he did have into a defence, and then attempted to parley with Trant. Seeing this for the delaying tactic it was, skirmishing broke out between the two forces, resulting in some casualties for both.[135] Trant's force was repulsed, and finally withdrew. Although Trant's attack was not pressed hard, and was beaten off, the exposure of such an important part of the *Armée de Portugal* to destruction was reckless. Loss of the artillery and supplies would have stopped the invasion in its tracks, but perhaps the ease with which Trant's Portuguese were repelled gave the French false optimism regarding the abilities of the Portuguese troops incorporated into Wellington's army. What it did indicate, certainly to Wellington, was that Trant was active in the enemy rear, and communications between the *Armée de Portugal* and Spain would be cut.[136]

On the same day, the head of Hill's division had reached Espinhal on its way to joining up with the rest of the allied army, and Leith was at Foz d'Arouce. Lecor's forces had also been recalled from around Castello Branco. Wellington was confident that within a few days his entire army would be concentrated in front of the French advance.[137]

On 23 September in a report to Berthier, Intendant General Lambert sounded a note of caution regarding both the supply situation and the problems of navigating the country without adequate intelligence. Lambert had worked hard with Massena to ensure that the army had adequate supplies for the invasion, but once inside Portugal he found,

> … everything was deserted, to the point that the prince never had a single guide. Everywhere the inhabitants had fled to hard to access places, chasing their cattle

130 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.43.
131 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.54.
132 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.293, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Lorvaõ, 20 September 1810.
133 See itinerary map, Raeuber, *Renseignements*, p.67.
134 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.182–83; Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.167–68; SHD, 7C9, 'Armée de Portugal, 7C9'.
135 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.182–83.
136 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.304, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Coimbra, 30 September1810.
137 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.293, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Lorvaõ, 20 September 1810.



Map 5 Tracing of map, Croquis Des Chemins de Viseu a Coimbra, 1810, Service Historique de la Défense, GR6 ML12 C3 N33 (1).

> before them, and taking away from their houses what might be of some use to us. However, the extreme fertility of the country, the abundance of wines, that of fruits and vegetable plants, provided a great deal of resources for the soldier, who, besides, had biscuit and rice in his bag, and herds of oxen …[138]

The seeming abundance is at odds with the effects expected from the orders issued by Wellington, and the reports of some of the soldiers slogging along the roads.[139] Any abundance was anticipated to disappear as the French penetrated closer to Lisbon and Wellington's threats to the population took effect.[140]

Wellington was still uncertain of the route the French were intending to take, fearing they would re-cross the Mondego. Brigadier General Pack was ordered on the 18th to occupy Santa Comba Dão with his Portuguese brigade, and to, '… push his advanced guard a considerable way in front, and … endeavour to ascertain whether the enemy has made any movement towards Santa Combadaõ [sic] and neighbourhood, either from the side of Vizeu through Tondella, or direct from Mongoalde [sic] by the left bank of the river Daõ [sic]'.[141] Pack was also instructed to destroy the bridges over the Dão and Cris on the approach of the enemy, being provided with an engineer and a supply of powder for the purpose. On the same day, Cotton was ordered to keep an intelligence officer and a party of hussars on the left of the Mondego, specifically to keep an eye on enemy movements on that side of the river.[142] Wellington wrote to Vice Admiral Berkeley later that day that, 'Things are not quite so bad as they will be supposed. The enemy's movements have enabled me to order Hill, Leith and Le Cor to join me. Coimbra is safe, and we have a good position'.[143] Wellington wrote several more times to Cotton asking him to keep some cavalry on the southern bank of the Mondego, to observe a possible French advance into the plains around Villa Cortez. The cavalry was not to engage, but to report the enemy's movements.[144] Whatever Wellington was thinking, the French advance had no subtlety to it, and was not at first to involve any attempts to outflank his army. Massena seemed satisfied with shepherding the allies back to Lisbon and the waiting ships.

From Viseu to Buçaco

Loison's division had pushed on from Viseu on the 19th, reaching Tondella on the 20th: VI Corps was now stretched out between Tondella and Viseu, a distance of some 15 miles.[145] On the following day the advanced guards of the VI and II Corps met at Santa Comba Dão.

138 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, pp.185–86, Rapport de l'Intendant General Lambert au Prince Berthier, Major-General, sur la situation de l'armee de Portugal, Viseu, 23 September 1810.

139 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.96.

140 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.208, Proclamation to the People of Portugal, 4 August 1810.

141 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.24, Instructions, Head-Quarters, Cortiço, September 18, 1810.

142 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.288, Wellington to Cotton, Cortiço, 18 September 1810, 6:00 a.m.

143 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.289, Wellington to Berkeley, Cortiço, 18 September 1810.

144 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.287, Wellington to Cotton, Sampaio, 17 September 1810, 8:30 a.m.; Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.288, Wellington to Lieutenant General Cotton, Cortiço, 18 September 1810, 6:00 a.m.

145 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, pp.41–42.

VIII Corps was still at Viseu where most of the artillery and baggage was collecting after trailing across from Almeida, and were engaged in re-shoeing horses, and repairing and replacing worn carriages where it was possible. Some wagons and guns were still en-route followed by the cavalry of Montbrun in the region of Mundão. In all, the whole French army was strung out over more than 26 miles of poor, mountainous roads. Keeping the French rearguard, artillery and reserve cavalry in sight, Cocks reported on the 20th, 'The greatest part of the [French] cavalry horses are said to be in bad condition and the artillery horses worse'.[146] The French artillery was having difficulty carrying sufficient ammunition and equipment as they had lost 1,500 horses in the preceding weeks.[147]

From 19 September the allied divisions were ordered to concentrate between Coimbra and Mealhada. However, the practicality of some of the roads for artillery was questioned, demonstrating that the previous reconnaissance undertaken by the Allied army was not as comprehensive as is sometimes thought.[148] Orders were issued for extra marches for the artillery if the route was particularly difficult, but this would leave some units without artillery if they should encounter the enemy. Some artillery units of the King's German Legion had found the road impossible to traverse and so were forced into a diversion of some six miles. There was also a mix up of roads taken by the infantry of Hill's 2nd Division, going by the Thomar road by mistake, and having to return to find the correct road.[149] Dickson reported that, 'The length of the march also was the occasion of a great number of infantry falling behind, so that when day broke the road was full of straggling parties, who committed great devastation amongst the vineyards adjoining the road'.[150] Hill was a day behind Wellington's planned movement schedule, and had ordered a forced march for the main body of his division to reach Espinhal by the evening of the 21st to make up time. As the days went on Wellington refined his view of the French movements. He ordered the various divisions of the army to concentrate around the Serra do Buçaco, whilst keeping Hill's troops on the left bank of the Mondego to protect his right flank, uncertain whether the French would attempt to outflank him by re-crossing the Mondego.

In a letter on the 21st from Massena, Ney was instructed not to push too far with the advanced guard, and to avoid engaging in a general battle with the enemy, especially as VI Corps was extended between Tondella and Sabugosa. Massena was uncertain how long it would take for the VIII Corps and artillery to catch up with the VI and II Corps, and wanted to begin concentrating his army for the advance into Coimbra.[151] Loison pushed the idea of a reconnaissance in force and occupied Santa Comba Dão, despite his orders to avoid bringing on a general action. Meanwhile, a picquet of the 1st (Royal) Dragoons was watching the bridge over the Criz, and the assembling VI Corps on the opposite bank. Wellington's expectation was that the advance of the VI Corps would be rapid once their engineers had repaired the bridge.[152]

146 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.79.
147 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, pp.39–40.
148 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.25, 19 September, 1810.
149 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, pp.285–86.
150 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.286.
151 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.379.
152 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.294, Wellington to Cotton, Convent of Bussaco, 21 September 1810, 9.30 p.m.

Reports from the 1st KGL Hussars' Lieutenant Cordemann to allied headquarters on the 22nd indicated the movement of parties of enemy troops around Sampaio, suggesting that the French might re-cross the Mondego. Wellington put in place cavalry patrols to watch for an enemy advance, and infantry to blow the bridges over the Alva should the advance occur in force.[153] Hill was positioned to cover the left bank of the Mondego, but also to be ready to cross the Mondego if the main enemy attack was to fall on the Buçaco position. Wellington wrote to his brother, 'The enemy have not passed the Criz, and are all on this side of the Mondego. I am in a capital position, but I fear it may be turned by its left. Its right is quite secure; and I have always the retreat open to Coimbra'.[154]

The French army slowly accumulated towards Mortagoa, the advanced guard skirmishing with the allied forward troops composed of Pack's Brigade and the Light Division under Craufurd, with the heavy cavalry of the 1st Dragoons.[155] The light cavalry of the 14th and 16th Light Dragoons, and the 1st KGL Hussars, relieved the heavy cavalry on the 22nd, posting piquets in front of Mortagoa.[156] On the afternoon of the 23rd the Light Division and Pack's Portuguese Brigade fought a rear-guard action from the bridge across the Criz, which had been destroyed, to Mortagoa, continually pursued by Loison's advanced guard. Pack had been given instructions to withdraw in the face of the enemy, and destroy the bridges at Barril and Santa Comba Dão: he was also told to keep headquarters informed of movements by the enemy.[157] There was a bitter skirmish around the village of Barril on the 23rd between the forces of Loison and Pack, which saw the village change hands at least twice. Loison was about to retire when some units of II Corps began to outflank the Light Division.[158] The allied outposts withdrew, leaving the village in the hands of the advanced guards of II and VI Corps. Before withdrawing the Portuguese troops destroyed the bridge and set fire to the crops around the village.[159] Although the bridge needed to be repaired, Loison reported to Ney that good fords existed both up- and down-stream.[160] The French advanced over the river, securing the crossings for the units following.[161]

Rations for the French troops were beginning to run low, and an issue of six days' biscuit to the VI Corps had been ordered, but Ney informed Massena that those rations had already been given to the II Corps. Instead the troops of Ney's Corps were each given two pounds of seed corn with which to bake their own bread or biscuit.[162] Lack of working mill equipment, destroyed by the retreating allied army, and the speed of the French advance, would make

153 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.295, Wellington to Lieutenant General Hill, Convent of Bussaco, 22 September 1810, 8:30 p.m.

154 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.97, Wellington to H. Wellesley, Convent of Bussaco, 22 September 1810.

155 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.293, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Lorvaõ, 20 September 1810.

156 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.41.

157 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.288, Extracts from the Instructions communicated by the QMG, Head quarters, Cortiçó, 18 September 1810.

158 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.184.

159 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.380.

160 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.380–81, Rapport du général Loison au maréchal Ney, Costo de Monteiro, evening of 23 September 1810.

161 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.170.

162 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.381.

grinding the corn into useful flour a difficult proposition for VI Corps, strung out along the road to Coimbra, and in daily contact with the enemy.

Despite the intensifying skirmishing between the two armies Massena did not anticipate that Wellington would force him to fight, as the intelligence seemed to indicate few defensible positions. He issued orders on the 24th for an advance on the 25th, 26th, and 27th by parallel routes on Coimbra, where new orders would be issued on the 28th.[163] The orders would put II Corps near Coimbra at Dianteiro via San Antonio do Cantaro, and the VI on the Oporto-Coimbra road at Fornos via Mortagoa and Luso.[164] The orders, '… together with maps of the terrain to be crossed, were sent to the army corps'.[165] The likelihood is that the map sent to the army corps is the same as the map currently held in the *Service Historique de la Defense* at Vincennes.[166] It shows the two roads mentioned in the orders and described by Pelet, but with the Serra hastily drawn on it in pencil. Once again, the Lopéz map cannot be blamed for the choice of routes taken towards Coimbra. Lopéz shows a range of hills, but these appear similar to others that have already been crossed, and would not indicate anything unusual. These hills are marked as the Sierra de Alcoba on Lopéz, with Buçaco and its range of hills shown in entirely the wrong position. The two routes over a range of hills combine into one route on the western side, and would not give the French the two lines of advance ordered by Massena. Neither Luso nor Dianteiro appear on the Lopéz map, and they are very small villages. Perhaps the knowledge of the *afrancesados,* or the availability of topographical information, was better than is thought. The allied rear-guard had successfully kept the French advanced guard contained, and unable to reconnoitre very far in front of the army. Thus, villages such as Luso and Dianteiro would be unknown to the French, unless they were shown on other maps available to them. The itinerary maps distributed to the Corps were clearly based on better intelligence than could be obtained from Lopéz or Jefferys.

Massena was still at Viseu, and did not realise that the allies were intending to make a stand on the approaches to Coimbra, or the strength of the position at Buçaco.[167] He would not come forward to the Buçaco ridge until the afternoon of the 26th, by which time Wellington had his forces concentrated in his path. To achieve that concentration, Wellington had ordered Hill's corps to be ready to move to the north bank of the Mondego, whilst leaving strong picquets at Ponte de Murcella and Ponte de Val d'Espinho and a covering force of cavalry in front of these positions.[168] Orders had gone out on the 20th to bring several of the divisions to the vicinity of the Buçaco position, and had instructed them to be encamped to the west of the ridge, out of sight of the enemy advanced-guard, apart from some picquets and artillery.[169] The final concentration of Wellington's army occurred on the 26th with the arrival of Spencer's division and Hill's corps.

163 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.381.

164 Adelino de Matos Coelho, Luis Paulo Correia Sodré de Albuquerque, and Álvaro Urze Pires, *Museu Militar Do Buçaco: Edição Comemorativa Do Centenário 1910-2010* (Lisboa: Direcção de História e Cultura Militar do Exército, 2010). See map on page 78-79; Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.381.

165 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.170.

166 SHD, GR6 ML12 C3 N33 (1), 'Croquis Des Chemins de Viseu a Coimbra'.

167 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.44.

168 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.295–96, Wellington to Hill, Convent of Bussaco, 22 September 1810, 8:30 p.m.

169 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.26–27, 20 September 1810.

To prepare to receive an attack, Wellington had time to order that, 'The pioneers with the division are to be employed in making communications to facilitate the movements of the artillery and troops to the points most liable to be attacked, and to where the guns can be placed to most advantage'.[170] A road of sorts was constructed along almost the entire length of the ridge, enabling troops, and especially artillery, to move more easily. Whilst these preparations were under way on the allied side, Massena's army was still marching from Viseu, with VIII Corps reaching Barril on the 26th, with orders to move to Moura by the next day.[171] Massena's orders of the 24th were irrelevant once it was clear that a portion of the allied army was concentrated in his army's front, seemingly ready and willing to give battle.

170 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.27–28, Bussaco, 22 September.
171 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.46.

8

The Portuguese Behaved Most Gallantly

Preparations and Dispositions

During the French advance from Almeida there had been almost no opposition from allied troops, but this situation began to change as Massena's forces moved towards the Serra do Buçaco. Wellington had begun collecting his army at the Serra, moving his headquarters to the Carmelite monastery there on 21 September. According to Brother José de S. Silvestre, an officer arrived on the 20th informing the brothers that Wellington and his staff required lodgings. On the 21st, 'There arrived here the Quarter Master General; he gave us a roll of the officers to whom we must give quarter; there were fifty'.[1] Wellington rejected the room which had been cleaned and whitewashed especially for him, as it only had one door. He chose another room with two doors, and then went to look at the roads to Mortagoa. On the 22nd he sent orders to Hill and Leith to move to the north bank of the Mondego if there was no enemy before them, and join the rest of the army on the ridge.[2] These instructions were confirmed to Hill on the 25th, ordering him to cross to the right bank of the Mondego, should he have no reason to believe there is a large force of French on the left bank. He was to bring the whole of the 2nd Division, along with Hamilton's Portuguese Division. Musket ammunition was to be made available at Botão for Hill's troops, along with additional supplies brought up by the river to Penacova.[3]

The advanced guard of the French II Corps reached San Antonio do Cantaro, and the VI Corps reached Moura, on the 25th, having pushed the Light Division back onto the Buçaco ridge. Craufurd seems to have delayed his withdrawal from in front of the ridge for too long, and was threatened with being outflanked. Wellington had written to Craufurd only the day before, cautioning him, 'You will make a handsome retreat from your present situation if you are only prepared in time'.[4] The allied rearguard was formed of the 1/52nd and some companies of the 1/95th, along with several squadrons of light cavalry, and was

1 The Diary of Brother José de S. Silvestre, quoted in Chambers, *Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco*, pp.144–45.
2 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.296, Instructions communicated by the QMG, Bussaco, 22 September 1810.
3 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.299, QMG to Lieutenant General Hill, Convent of Bussaco, 25 September 1810.
4 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.299, Wellington to Brigadier General Craufurd, Convent of Bussaco, 24 September, 1810, 8:00 p.m.

heavily pressed by the French advanced guard of Loison's division, supported by Marchand.[5] Wellington took personal command of the situation and brought the Light Division back at a rapid pace.[6] That evening Reynier wrote to Ney in uncertain terms that, 'I am waiting for news of what the enemy is doing in front of you before making any movement; if you think it is a rear guard and you attack, I will attack too. If you think it proper to wait for the orders of the Marshal Prince d'Essling, I will wait too'.[7] In a letter to his sister on the 25th, Cocks wrote, 'I believe Marshal Massena, Prince d'Essling, is in a scrape and I flatter myself we are likely soon to give him, with all his titles, a sound drubbing. He has tried to outmanoeuvre our gallant Wellington, and he has hitherto completely taken in the Frenchman …'.[8]

Ney believed a quick attack could carry the enemy position, so on the morning of the 26th he sent a report to Massena requesting him to come to the forward positions and see the situation for himself. He told Reynier, in response to his message of the previous evening, that he would attack without hesitation if he was in command, but Massena did not arrive until around 4:00 p.m.[9] Consequently, late on the 26th, following a brief reconnaissance of the ridge, Massena called a meeting of his senior commanders. There was discussion between Massena and his subordinates about the approach to take, considering the apparent readiness of Wellington to give battle. Ney, in favour of attacking earlier in the day, had seen the opportunity lost through delay, and now counselled caution. He suggested withdrawing to Viseu, then marching on Oporto. Massena, who had clear instructions from Napoleon, rejected this idea. Even if the French army was to suffer a defeat, it could retreat to its base of operations at Almeida, 'Victory, on the contrary, will first force the English to evacuate the country between the Tagus and the Mondego, from which we will draw the resources we lack, and then to re-embark, because they will not be able to sustain themselves long in Lisbon, since they will find themselves stranded and reduced to supply by sea'.[10]

The two forces coalesced along the line of the Buçaco ridge, with the main Allied forces distributed along the top, and the French forming on the ridges in front and in the valleys below. In between, the skirmishers continued to bicker. By late morning on the 26th there was skirmishing along the line between the two armies which flared into small battles, Lemonnier-Delafosse recalling, '… at about eleven o'clock the attack on the English outposts began; they occupied several hills in front of the 2nd Corps in the foothills of the mountain. My company had to take three of these semi-entrenched positions'.[11] The skirmishing would continue throughout the day as the French tried to establish their positions and probe the Allied defences.

5 Jonathan Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier: During a Service in the West Indies, at the Siege of Copenhagen in 1807, in the Peninsula and the South of France in the Campaigns from 1808 to 1814, with the Light Division, in the Netherlands in 1815, Including the Battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1831), p.159; Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.187.

6 John Kincaid, *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade, in the Peninsula, France and the Netherlands from 1809 to 1815*, The Spellmount Library of Military History (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1998), pp.83–84.

7 Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula*, Vol.III, pp.353–54, Reynier à Monsieur le marechal duc d'Elchingen, St. Antonio, le 26 Septembre, a 8 heures du matin.

8 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, pp.80–81.

9 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.382–85.

10 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.192–93.

11 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.62.

Massena prepared to attack the Allied position on the following day. Reynier's II Corps, comprising more than 17,000 troops, was positioned around the village of San Antonio do Cantaro, on the road from Mortagoa to Palheiros, with the corps cavalry positioned behind the infantry. Ney's VI Corps, made up of more than 24,000 men, formed up to the north of Reynier, around the village of Moura. Behind the VI Corps as a reserve was placed Junot's VIII Corps of nearly 18,000 men. Along the road from Mortagoa, approximately a mile behind Junot's VIII Corps, were the almost 3,500 men of the Reserve Cavalry under Montbrun. The terrain precluded the use of cavalry in large, formed bodies, which meant that a sizeable proportion of Massena's army would be useless and would take no part in the coming battle.

Writing to Cotton on the 21st, Wellington explained, 'We have an excellent position here, in which I am strongly tempted to give battle. Unfortunately Hill is one day later than expected; and there is a road upon our left by which we may be turned and cut off from Coimbra. But I do not yet give up hopes of discovering a remedy for the last misfortune …'.[12] On the 24th he wrote to Charles Stuart, 'We are in an excellent position, indeed one which cannot easily be attacked in front … I shall do everything in my power to stop the enemy here. If I cannot do it here, I shall try to stop him at Coimbra'.[13] Additional defensive measures were always possible, and the military road that was constructed behind the crest would enable troops to move very quickly from one point to another along the ridge.

Wellington's troops were distributed along the ridge with Hill's 2nd Division placed at the extreme south of the ridge between Penamcor and Palmases, covering the right flank of the army and keeping communication over the Mondego with Lecor and Fane at Ponte de Murcella. To the left of Hill's Division was Leith's 5th Division which oversaw the road from Carvalho to Palmases. Next was Picton's 3rd Division posted about the road from San Antonio do Cantaro to Palheiros. Wellington's dispositions for Picton's division were as follows;

> The division is to be cantoned or hutted in two separate corps, as follows : One brigade of British infantry to be near Loredo or Carmos, at the point from whence it can most conveniently ascend the serra to the southern extremity of the park wall of the convent of Busaco. One brigade of British infantry, the Portuguese brigade, and the artillery, to be near the villages of Contenças and Palheiros, at the point where the road, coming over the serra from S. Antonio do Cantaro, passes through to go to Botaõ. A strong piquet from the latter body of troops is to be posted on the eastern side of the serra near S. Antonio do Cantaro ; and a piquet of communication is to be placed upon the top of the serra where the road crosses it. The pioneers of the regiments are to be employed, in the first instance, in making a communication to enable the artillery to ascend to the top of the serra ; and, in the next place, in making such other communications as may facilitate the ascent of the infantry. Major Gen. Picton and Major Gen. Leith will communicate with each other, and will mutually support each other in case of either being attacked.[14]

12 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.294, Wellington to Cotton, Convent of Bussaco, 21 September 1810.
13 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.299–300, Wellington to Stuart, Bussaco, 24 September 1810.
14 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.27, Bussaco, 22 September.

The brigade of British infantry under Lightburne which had been posted near Loredo was moved to its right as Spencer's division arrived at the ridge and took up its position on the 26th.[15] Picton moved his troops into position on the ridge in very much the same arrangement as described above, but the formation was closed up as other formations filled in the position to Picton's left.

Directly to Picton's left was Spencer's 1st Division which extended to the monastery of Buçaco. Holding the next position was Craufurd's Light Division covering the road from Moura to Luso, with Cole's 4th Division holding the extreme left of the line. Craufurd was instructed to place, '… the different corps of your division and Pack's brigade en echelon, on the two sides of the road, from the entrance of the heights to the village where you have your quarters'.[16] However, Wellington, as described above, oversaw the final retreat of the Light Division onto the ridge, and placed the division according to his wishes. There were various independent brigades of Portuguese placed along the line, filling in gaps and acting as reserves. The allied front was not a continuous line of troops, but had several large gaps, sometimes almost as much as a mile, between units, but the main routes over the ridge were protected, and there was sufficient time from the beginning of the French advance to move troops to any threatened spot.[17]

There was little for the French to see during their reconnaissance, as Wellington placed his troops to the rear of the ridge, out of sight of the enemy. He wrote specifically to Hill that, '… the troops are to be kept a little behind the ridge, so that they may not be seen by the enemy until it becomes necessary to move them up on the ridge to repel an attack'.[18] The outposts, and some artillery, on the slopes of the ridge would have been visible to the French along with the occasional mounted officer taking a look into the valley. The majority of troops visible would be the skirmishers from the battalion light companies, along with the riflemen of the British 1/95th and 5/60th, and Portuguese *caçadores*. Their intention was to stop the French skirmish line from reaching the Allied battle line, as well as firing directly at the approaching French formations, aiming at the officers and leading ranks in an attempt to disorganise their advance and reduce their morale. These advanced posts were clearly visible to the French, as Pelet remarked that on the morning of the battle: '… halfway up the slope a line of [allied] skirmishers was established, sustained by small posts and strong reserves'.[19]

15 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.30, To Lieutenant-General Sir Brent Spencer, Convent of Busaco, 25 September, 7:30 p.m.

16 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.299, Wellington to Craufurd, Convent of Busaco, 24 September 1810, 8:00 p.m.

17 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.633, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10 November 1810.

18 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.299, QMG to Hill, Convent of Busaco, 25 September 1810.

19 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.177.

The Battle of Buçaco

The Allied army had spent an uncomfortable night on the ridge. Grattan recalled, '… each man, with his firelock in his grasp, remained at his post … we had no fires …'.[20] The French had no such restrictions, and large groups of fires could be seen in the valley, the clusters denoting the position of the main army corps. Massena issued his attack orders on the evening of 26 September, and these demonstrated the lack of thorough reconnaissance which had been undertaken before they were issued. The orders for the Reynier's Corps read:

> II Corps will attack the right of the enemy's army; it will endeavour, in effect, to break through the enemy's line, after climbing the most accessible point of the mountain. They should move there in one or two columns, preceded by piquets. Once they have reached the summit, they will form in tight column and continue along the crest of the mountain towards the Coimbra road. The point where it will have to stop will be the monastery of Bussaco …[21]

The plan was straightforward in its description: Reynier's troops were intended to cut the line of the ridge and then reform before turning north to roll up the Allied line towards the monastery. According to Pelet, Massena, '… added several deployments verbally. General Reynier made a few observations on his attack and said that he would be drubbed'.[22]

Massena's assumption was that Wellington's line ended at the pass above San Antonio do Cantaro on the road to Palheiros, or that the troops to the south of this point were incapable of offering support. Koch wrote that, 'Although it was impossible to reconnoiter [sic] the strength of the allies on the opposite side, Reynier concluded … that a simple rear-guard was in front of us …'[23] Reynier wrote to Ney at 8:00 a.m. on the 26th, reporting that what seemed to be a rearguard of five battalions of Portuguese troops was at the pass above him, along with six pieces of artillery and a detachment of British infantry. He also noted the line of outposts, reaching from the road from Carvalho on the left as far as the VI Corps on the right.[24] Koch suggested that a Portuguese deserter reported to Reynier that in addition to the troops holding the pass, there was only the Milicia de Thomar to the south, and further south at Ponte de Murcella, on the other side of the Mondego, was Hill's Division.[25] This would indicate that Reynier, and subsequently Massena, knew there were troops further to their left, but believed they would be unable to interfere in the battle. In the case of the Milicia de Thomar these troops would be unequal to the task of stopping an attack. Trant's militia had demonstrated the fragility of these troops when faced with formed enemy units,

20 Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814*, p.28; Leith Hay, *A Narrative of the Peninsular War*, pp.161–62.

21 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.388.

22 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.176.

23 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.188.

24 Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula*, Vol.III, pp.353–54, A Monsieur le marechal duc d' Elchingen, St. Antonio, le 26 Septembre, a 8 heures du matin.

25 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.189.

and the French were dismissive of their quality, indeed the Milicia de Thomar broke and ran during the attack at the pass. For Hill's Division, it appeared they would take too long to march the five or more miles from Ponte de Murcella to the pass once an attack had started. In reality, at the beginning of the battle, to the south of the pass, but north of the Mondego and well within marching distance, were Leith's 5th and Hill's 2nd Divisions, totalling nearly 18,000 men.

To the north, Ney's orders were to observe Reynier's attack: 'The 6th corps will attack the two roads leading to the road to Coimbra; one of the divisions will form a reserve and the artillery will be placed in different positions to support it if necessary. Marshal Ney will send his two columns of attack … when General Reynier is master of the heights, and he marches on the monastery of Bussaco. It will be up to Marshal Ney to press his attack if he sees the enemy move to make an advance on General Reynier or to make a retreat'.[26] These orders too are straightforward: once Reynier had occupied the heights and was advancing towards the monastery, Ney was to attack what Massena saw as the Allied army's centre-left.

Reynier's Attack

A view towards Picton's position from San Antonio do Cantaro, where the II Corps formed up for its attack. (Author's photo)

26 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.388.

In accordance with the orders received from Massena, at approximately 5:00 a.m. Reynier formed up his corps around San Antonio do Cantaro ready for the attack. Historically, the attacks by II Corps are shown to be disparate, coming from between the villages of Pendurada and San Antonio do Cantaro, more than 500 yards apart.[27] However, a map in the National Archives at Kew, drawn by Major Sturgeon of the Royal Staff Corps, shows the attacks emanating from San Antonio do Cantaro alone, and proceeding along the road over the ridge.[28] This map would presumably have been made from reports and observations similar to those mentioned in 'Instruction given to the Officers of the Quartermaster-General's department'. This requested the officers of the Royal Staff Corps and Quartermaster General's department to, amongst other things,

> … note the situation of the several divisions and regiments of the allied troops previous to the engagement, as likewise that of the artillery. They will note likewise the situation of the troops and artillery of the enemy, and the formation and direction of his attacks. They will make memorandums of all the changes that take place during the action, on either side, and, as far as they can, of the circumstances which appear to have given occasion to them.[29]

The French chroniclers support the location of the columns as being in or directly next to San Antonio do Cantaro. Pelet says II Corps was, '… on the road of San Antonio do Cantaro …'.[30] According to Koch, Reynier's corps was positioned with Merle's division at the foot of the ridge, on the right of road out of San Antonio do Cantaro. Fririon, the *Armée de Portugal*'s chief of staff, places Merle at the foot of the ridge by San Antonio do Cantaro.[31] Heudelet's division occupied San Antonio do Cantaro with his first brigade under *Général de Brigade* Foy, and the second under *Général de Brigade* Arnaud to the east of the village.[32] The cavalry of Lamotte was placed to the rear of these formations: Heudelet and Lamotte formed the Corps reserve.[33] The positioning of these units around the village of San Antonio do Cantaro makes topographical sense as the village is on a small spur which protrudes from the ridge, eastwards past the village, along the road to Lourinhal.

The attacks on the ridge above San Antonio do Cantaro can be broken down into two separate attempts to force the position. First was the attack by Merle's division which was coordinated with an attack by the 31e Légère of Arnaud's brigade of Heudelet's division. Second was the attack by Foy's brigade of the 17e Légère and 70e Ligne. The regiments of Merle's and Heudelet's division were mostly experienced troops with few conscripts in their ranks. Many historians break these attacks up into three separate attempts to take the ridge around Picton's position, but from the French records the indication is that Merle's and

27 Ian Robertson, *An Atlas of the Peninsular War 1808-1814* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp.50–51; Horward, *The Battle of Bussaco*, p.98.

28 TNA, WO 78/5966 to WO 78/5969, Sturgeon and Westmacott, 'Battle of Busaco'.

29 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.32, Instruction given to the Officers of the Quartermaster-General's department, Headquarters, 27 September 1810.

30 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.174.

31 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.47.

32 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.193–94.

33 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.47.

Arnaud's attacks were an attempt at a coordinated assault. Fririon supplies more information regarding the tactics Reynier was using in his attempt to take the pass. Arnaud's brigade was to attack the pass, '… to support Merle's division …'.[34]

The Allied defences at the pass initially consisted of Colonel Mackinnon's brigade of the British 1/45th, 74th, and 1/88th Foot, with a Portuguese brigade of the 9° and 21° Infantaria under *Coronel* Champalimaud. During the evening of the 26th Picton noted that there was a gap of about a mile between his Division and that of Spencer, so he redeployed the 1/88th to the left, extending his division to fill the gap. However, during the next day, Lightburne's Brigade was reported to be on Picton's left, so the gap will have been less than a mile. There is doubt about the final deployment of the whole of Picton's division, but the following description has been pieced together from the eye-witness accounts, and a survey of the topographical features mentioned in those accounts when compared to contemporary and modern maps of the area.

In advance of Picton's position was the skirmish line which consisted of three companies of the 5/60th under Colonel Williams, and the light companies of 1/45th, 74th, and 1/88th: 'Picton threw the whole of these into the ravines of St. Antonio de Cantaro [*sic*], to the right-front of the position'.[35] It is worth considering here, before the detailed descriptions of the attacks, the difference in the size of skirmish screens between the two armies. Picton deployed the light companies of the regiments from Mackinnon's Brigade, and the rifle companies from the 5/60th attached to Lightburne's Brigade. It is unlikely that the light companies of Lightburne's Brigade were deployed as their casualties were trivial. The skirmish line would have been posted down the slope, forming a roughly continuous line in front of Picton's extended position. From the descriptions of the attacks the light company from the 1/45th and the riflemen of the 5/60th, totalling approximately 200 men, were deployed in front of the main pass, and were involved in the repulse of the attack by the 31e Légère. The light companies of the 74th and 1/88th, totalling approximately 110 men, were deployed to the front of the 1/88th and opposed Merle's attack. The skirmish line would, therefore, amount to approximately 165 light company men from the various battalions, and 145 riflemen.

Facing the allied skirmishers would be their counterparts from Merle's division and the 31e Légère. Graindorge's brigade would have been able to put out a screen of skirmishers some 450 strong, and Sarrut's almost the same, from the *voltigeur* companies alone. It is therefore possible that Merle's attack was preceded by approximately 900 skirmishers. Two of the three regiments of Merle's division were light infantry, and it is reasonable to expect that they may have deployed extra companies from some of the battalions to strengthen the skirmish screen. The 31e Légère would have been able to deploy approximately 250 skirmishers from the *voltigeur* companies alone, but being a light regiment, may have detached additional companies to strengthen the skirmish line. Lemonnier-Delafosse wrote, 'All the companies of voltigeurs opened the fire …' whilst the regiments formed and marched forward.[36] Thus, an estimated minimum of 1,150 French would face some 310 Allied

34 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.48.

35 Gibbes Rigaud, *Celer et Audax: A Sketch of the Services of the Fifth Battalion, Sixtieth Regiment (Rifles) during the Twenty Years of Their Existence* (Oxford: E. Pickard Hall & J.H. Stacy, 1879), p.132.

36 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.69.

skirmishers. However, the troops were unevenly distributed, with the majority of French skirmishers, the 900 of Merle's division, opposing the smaller part of the Allied skirmishers, only some 110 men from the light companies of the 1/88th and 74th.

Two batteries of Portuguese artillery under Major Arentschild, comprising one battery of 6-pounders, commanded by *Capitán* da Silva, and one of 9-pounders commanded by *Capitán* Penedo, were posted at the pass in direct support of Picton's division.[37] Two guns of the Portuguese artillery under Dickson were brought into action towards the later stages of the battle at the pass,[38] and two Royal Artillery guns commanded by Captain Lane were posted to the left of the 1/88th during Merle's attack.[39] The exact location of the French artillery during the attacks is uncertain. Reynier's divisional guns were probably positioned on a low plateau along the French positions by San Antonio do Cantaro, in positions, '… most favourable to the action'.[40] Due to the elevation of the ridge on which the allies were positioned the French guns undoubtedly had difficulty firing at the pass. It is likely that the gunners had to dig in the trails of the guns to enable the barrels to be elevated sufficiently to reach the crest of the ridge.[41]

Arnaud's Assault

Although, according to French commentaries on the battle, Heudelet's division was meant to act as the reserve for the attack, a regiment from Arnaud's brigade, the 31e Légère, had been selected for part of the initial assault on the pass. The other regiment of the brigade, the 47e Ligne, remained at San Antonio do Cantaro in reserve. The 31e Légère consisted of approximately 1,500 men in four battalions, and the 47e of more than 2,000 men in four battalions. There seems to be no explanation why the accounts of the attack from the French side mention only the 31e, or why a single regiment should be sent unsupported into the attack, unless it was to act as a diversion for the main attack by Merle's division. All the other attacks of that day were undertaken by the French in brigade or divisional strength.

The road from San Antonio do Cantaro winds up towards the pass, zig-zagging to reduce the slope of the road surface. About two hundred yards from San Antonio do Cantaro a footpath forks off to the right of the main road and ascends almost parallel to the road along a continuation of the spur of land upon which San Antonio do Cantaro sits, shown in contemporary maps as well as in Wyld's *Atlas*, which was based on maps drawn at the time of the Peninsular War.[42] This path heads towards what Chambers called the 'false

37 TNA, WO 78/5962, 'Sketch Showing Situation of the Combined British and Portuguese Army under the Duke of Wellington in the Position of Busaco, When Attacked by French Army under Marshal Massena on 27 September 1810', Distribution of the Combined British & Portuguese Army on 27 September 1810; Soriano, *Historia Da Guerra Civil*, Vol.V Parte II, p.193; Lipscombe, *Wellington's Guns*, p.128.

38 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.296, Dickson to MacLeod, Furadoro, 9 November 1810.

39 Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814*, p.31.

40 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.194.

41 Hughes, *Firepower*, p.145.

42 TNA, WO 78/1004/1/6, 'The Battle of Busaco: General Position of the French and Allied Armies on the 26th Septr. 1810'; and 'The Attack 27th Septr. 1810', 1810; Champ de Bataille de Bussaco, Lieutenant Colonel Balagny, 'La Bataille de Bussaco', *Revue d'histoire Rédigée à l'État-Major de l'armée, Section Historique* 32, no. Octobre-Décembre (1908):

pass' to the north of the true San Antonio do Cantaro – Palheiros pass.[43]. At this fork, Merle's division moved right, along the footpath, and the 31e Légère continued along the San Antonio do Cantaro – Palheiros road. The troops of Merle's division were accompanied by *Capitain*e Charlet, an aide-de-camp to Reynier, who had reconnoitred the ground the day before.[44] However, 'The 31e Légère, the left column, did not need a guide since it had to climb following the road leading to the pass alone'.[45] The implication from this description is that Merle's division and the 31e Légère advanced at the same time. The intention seems to be for the 31e to march to the plateau where the road passed over the crest of the ridge, and then to deploy to attack the defenders, whilst Merle's division outflanked the position. The 31e Légère was to advance to the left of Graindorge's and Sarrut's brigades of Merle's Division, which would advance on the right, attempting to co-ordinated their attacks on the ridge. The 31e Légère formed up one company wide, one battalion behind the other, and ascended the ridge. As the regiment was advancing in column of platoons, it would have been approximately 21 men wide, and 60 ranks deep, as the four *voltigeur* companies had been deployed to skirmish ahead of the column. Preceded by a dense line of skirmishers of the *voltigeur* companies of the regiment, the 31e Légère began its ascent along the road.[46]

As the mist began to clear in the early morning, Major General Picton was with his 3rd Division at the San Antonio do Cantaro pass. At the same time as the French artillery began firing at the pass, and the 31e Légère was seen advancing up the road, he heard firing from his left, and assumed it was coming from in front of the position held by the 1/88th. He sent Major Gwynne to the left with four companies of the 1/45th to reinforce the 1/88th, but remained at the pass himself.[47]

As the 31e Légère advanced, the screen of *voltigeurs* drove back the Allied skirmishers. The advancing column received a furious supporting cannonade from the fourteen French cannon posted on knolls opposite the pass at San Antonio do Cantaro.[48] However, these guns were only just able to reach the lowest point of the pass over the ridge. Noël recalled that his artillery was sent to support the attack of the II Corps, but, '… in such an attack our artillery could not be of much help'.[49] Directly in front of the advance of the French column were the 21° and 9° Infantaria of Champalimaud's Brigade and the British 74th Foot, supported by the two Portuguese artillery batteries under Major von Arentschildt. Despite being pushed back by the French *voltigeurs*, the Allied skirmishers kept up a vigorous fire on the French column.

592; TNA, WO 78/5966 to WO 78/5969, Sturgeon and Westmacott, 'Battle of Busaco'; *Maps and Plans, Showing the Principal Movements, Battles & Sieges in Which the British Army Was Engaged during the War from 1808 to 1814, in the Spanish Peninsular and the South of France.* (London: James Wyld, 1840).

43 Chambers, Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco, pp.43–48.

44 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.193.

45 Lieutenant Colonel Balagny, 'La Bataille de Bussaco', *Revue d'histoire Rédigée à l'État-Major de l'armée, Section Historique* 33, no. Janvier-Mars (1909), p.138.

46 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.70.

47 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.633–35, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10 November 1810.

48 Henry MacKinnon, *A Journal of the Campaign in Portugal and Spain: Containing Remarks On the Inhabitants, Customs, Trade, and Cultivation of Those Countries, From the Year 1809 To 1812* (Bath: Duffield, 1812), p.76.

49 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.99.

At the same time as the column of the 31e was approaching the pass, Picton became aware that the firing away to his left had increased. Leaving Colonel Mackinnon in command, Picton took a battalion of the 8° Infantaria under Major Birmingham, and the remaining five companies of the 1/45th and moved to intercept what was clearly another attack.[50] Mackinnon recalled, 'The first column came to our left, and was ascending the hill … The next column advanced part of the way up the hill before our guns …'[51] Picton noted,

> … the fire of musketry on the left appearing to increase and draw nearer, I directed Colonel Mackinnon to take the immediate command of the troops at the pass of St. Antonio, and rode towards the left, with the Assistant Adjutant-General, Major Pakenham, leaving my aide-de-camp, Captain Cuthbert, and the Assistant Quartermaster-General, Captain Anderdon, to bring up as fast as possible one battalion of the 8th Portuguese regiment, and the five remaining companies of the 45th regiment.[52]

Although the 8° Infantaria under Birmingham reached the position to the left where the 1/88th was being attacked, it appears that Picton's order for the remaining five companies of the 1/45th was either not received or not carried out, as they were involved in the later defeat of Foy's column. Another explanation is that the five companies of the 1/45th were in the process of moving when Foy's attack took place, and were able to realign to face it. It is worth noting that in his autobiography, Private William Brown, part of the 1/45th, does not mention being involved directly in any fighting, which raises the possibility that not all the companies of the 1/45th joined the fight.[53]

The road up to the pass took several turns as it approached the crest, and this would have presented the flank of the column to the various waiting Allied troops and artillery. The scene of action is limited by the terrain as the slope levels out into the plateau some 200-300 yards wide, bounded on both sides by a rise, where the Allied infantry and artillery deployed. The leading battalion of the 31e Légère was received by the steady fire of the Portuguese 21° Infantaria : three companies of the British 74th moved up to support them, and shifted to their left to fire into the flank of the French column.[54] This was augmented by the riflemen of the 5/60th who had taken up position on the opposite flank of the column and were adding their well-directed fire, with Arentschildt's batteries firing canister into the advancing enemy. Lemonnier-Delafosse recalled,

> While climbing, I was pained to see my sergeant … having his forearm carried off by a cannonball, and a few minutes after having begun forming my company

50 See section on Merle's assault, below.

51 MacKinnon, *A Journal of the Campaign in Portugal and Spain*, p.76.

52 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.633–35, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10 November 1810.

53 William Brown (ed. Steve Brown), *The Autobiography, or Narrative of a Soldier: The Peninsular War Memoirs of William Brown of the 45th Foot* (Solihull: Helion, 2017), p.51.

54 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.633–35, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10 November 1810.

The view from Wellington's command position looking south towards Picton's position. (Photo by Lucy Bamford)

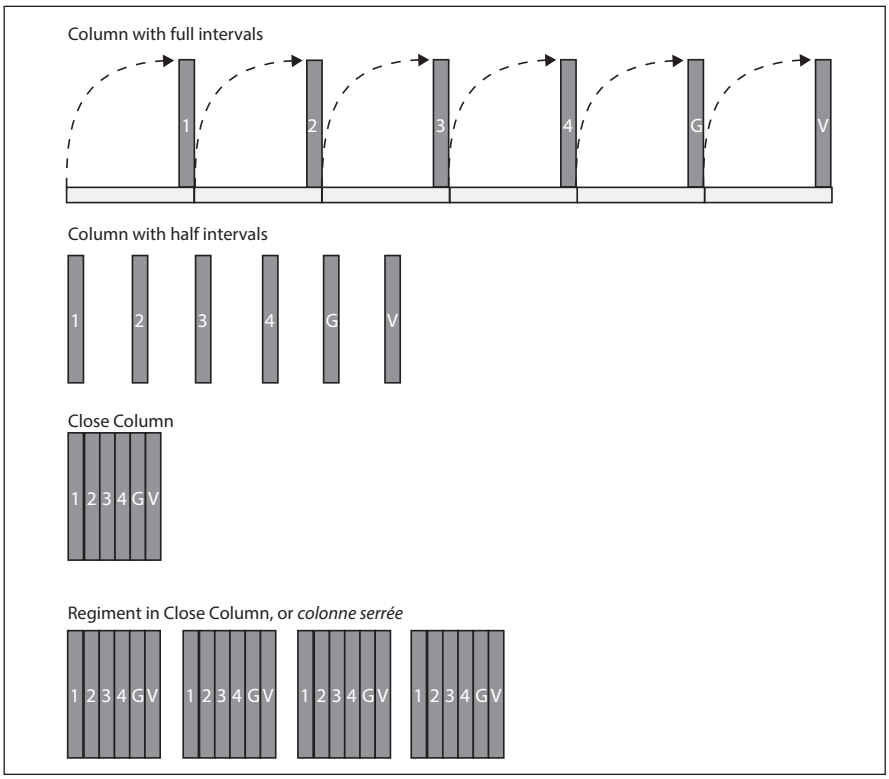
> for battle, I received a bullet in the right eyebrow; the blow, not very dangerous, knocked me down, however. The waxed taffeta cap which covered my hat, torn by the bullet, made such a noise that I thought I had a broken skull.[55]

Captain John Fremantle, observing the battle whilst looking for his regiment, wrote, 'The French walked up the hill in the most gallant style …',[56] but despite repeated efforts to deploy into line, the 31e suffered too many casualties and was beginning to lose its cohesion. One or possibly two battalions formed partial lines, but suffered terribly from the effects of canister from Arentschildt's Portuguese batteries. The momentum of the attack had been lost. Lemonnier-Delafosse described the sustained fire they were subject to: 'I confess that in my life I have not seen it executed like this in accuracy and speed'.[57] On the Allied side,

55 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.71.

56 John Fremantle and Gareth Glover, *Wellington's Voice: The Candid Letters of Lieutenant Colonel John Fremantle, Coldstream Guards, 1808-1837* (London: Frontline Books, 2012), pp.67–70, Coimbra, 30 September 1810.

57 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, pp.70–71.

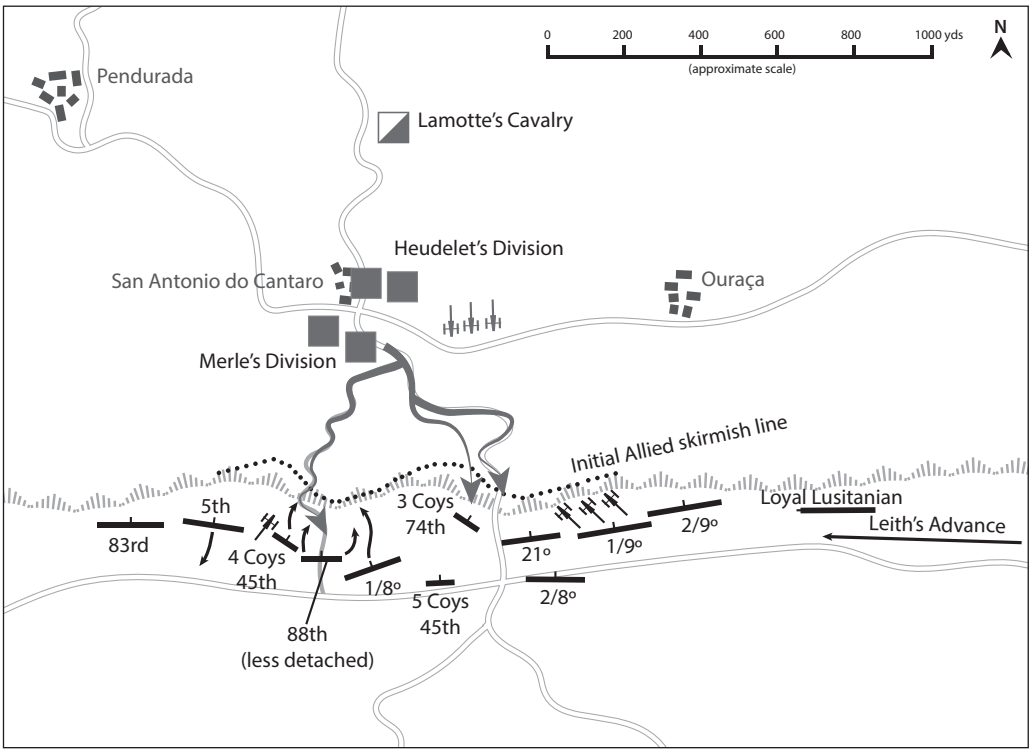


Map 6 Diagram of French formations.

Coronel Champalimaud was wounded in the engagement leading his Portuguese brigade, and Lieutenant Colonel Sutton took over command.[58] Lemonnier-Delafosse continues, 'I got up, but stunned; Blinded by the blood that flowed from my wound, I was going to hand over command to Gay, my lieutenant, when, on all sides, a retreat was begun: was the order given? I do not believe it …'.[59]

According to Fririon, the 31e Légère, '… remained there for a moment; but its colonel (Munier) [sic, should be Meunier] was killed, this regiment was forced to yield the ground to the troops which overwhelmed it'.[60] It appears that the combatants engaged in a musketry duel, and did not come to a bayonet charge, but this exchange of fire was sufficient to stop and defeat the French column. So much artillery ammunition had been fired that Arentschildt's batteries were close to running out. Colonel Mackinnon reported to Picton upon his return that the French had been unable to make any impression on the defenders at the pass.[61] The French column retreated swiftly down the way it

58 Soriano, *Historia Da Guerra Civil*, Vol.V Parte II, p.93.
59 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.71.
60 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.48.
61 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.633–35, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10 November 1810.



Map 7 Reynier's attack.

had ascended. Lemonnier-Delafosse recalled, 'In this precipitous descent, under a hail of bullets, my main anxiety was receiving one in the back …'[62] The 31e Légère suffered approximately 45 killed and 250 wounded in this attack. It is probable that the 47e was left at the bottom of the slope as a reserve for the 31e, as the 47e with eight killed and eight wounded does not appear to have either engaged the enemy or come within effective artillery range.

The French artillery continued to fire despite the defeat of the 31e Légère, although its effects were limited because of the height of the Allied positions compared to the French artillery. Two Portuguese guns of Arentschildt's batteries were dismounted at this point, but whether that was due to French fire, or the effects of having to depress the barrel to engage the enemy columns, is unknown.[63] At the same time, the Portuguese artillery hit and blew up a French ammunition tumbril which killed twelve men.[64]

62 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.73.
63 Hughes, *Firepower*, p.145.
64 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.73.

Merle's Assault

The French formations used during the attack at Buçaco have been a subject of discussion since the battle was fought.[65] Fririon describes the attack by Merle's division as being *en colonne serrée*, or in a close column, and that of Loison as being *en masse par brigades*, or close column by brigade.[66] Koch describes Merle's division as being formed *en masse par bataillon* or close battalion columns.[67] If the battalion was at full strength, formed in three ranks, this would be a block of infantry 80 men wide and nine ranks deep. If it was formed by platoon, this would be one company wide and six deep; 40 men wide by 18 ranks deep. If the column was formed by section, it would be half a company wide; 20 men wide by 36 ranks deep. However, most of the infantry battalions were understrength and would therefore be reduced in width but not depth. Using the 36e Ligne as an example, there were approximately 1,990 men in four battalions, giving 497 men per battalion, approximately 82 per company. A column of platoons, one company wide, would be 27 men wide by 15 deep, presuming the *voltigeur* company had been sent forward. As the ground at Buçaco was extremely difficult to traverse, being steep and rocky, and the roads and paths very narrow, it is likely that the initial advance of the French columns was undertaken by platoon or section, as this would be easier to keep in formation.

The attack by Merle's division was aimed at the 'false pass', which would have been empty of troops when Charlet reconnoitred it the evening before. Merle reported to Reynier, 'The division left its positions on the left and behind Santo Antonio at four o'clock in the morning, and advanced to the foot of the high mountain occupied by the English army'.[68] Merle's division advance along the pathway which leaves the San Antonio to Palheiros road, which corresponds with Foy's description: 'The 1st Division climbed the mountain, throwing itself to the right …'[69] The columns advanced over broken terrain:

> The ground which the two columns of the 2nd corps were to traverse was difficult; the slope was steep and the ground, bristling with boulders, was covered with heather and thorny broom that bloodied the legs of the soldiers through their clothes, made walking difficult for troops in massed formation and prevented the maintenance of the initial formation …[70]

As Arnaud's attack was in progress Merle's column approached the summit of the ridge where the 1/88th was placed. Sarrut's brigade was on the right and to the front with Graindorge's brigade to the left as they advanced upon the enemy.[71] Picton's account suggests the fog had hidden Merle's columns until their own skirmish screen made contact with the allied skirmishers.[72] Grattan

65 See, for example, Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War*, Vol.4, p.381.
66 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, pp.47–50.
67 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.193.
68 Balagny, 'La Bataille de Bussaco', pp.134–135.
69 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, p.102.
70 Balagny, 'La Bataille de Bussaco', p.131.
71 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.194–95; Balagny, 'La Bataille de Bussaco', p.195.
72 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.633–35, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10 November 1810.

recalled, 'A vast crowd of tirailleurs were pressing onward with great ardour, and their fire, as well as their numbers, was so superior to that of our advance[d troops], that some men of the brigade of Lightburne, as also a few of the 88th Regiment, were killed while standing in line'.[73] This vast crowd would have been the approximately 900 skirmishers preceding the advance of Merle's columns, overwhelming the Allied outposts through sheer weight of numbers. They also threatened to overwhelm the 1/88th, which comprised only some 679 rank and file. The British 2/5th under Lieutenant Colonel King, part of Lightburne's Brigade, began to suffer casualties and was moved backwards to bring it out of effective range of the enemy's skirmishers.

On arriving at the position occupied by the 1/88th, Picton reported that he found the light companies of the 1/88th and 74th '… retiring in disorder and the head of the enemy's column, already in possession of the strong rocky point, deliberately firing down upon us, and the remainder of a large column pushing up the hill with great rapidity'.[74] Captain Bury and Lieutenant Mackie from the 1/88th were sent forward with reinforcements, a file of men from each company of the 1/88th for the skirmish line.[75] Picton reported that he and Major Pakenham were rallying the light troops when Major Smith of the 1/45th joined them. Smith then led these troops forward against the French who were still firing from the rocky point, and pushed them from it. Smith was killed during this brief fight.[76]

Grattan describes the advance of the enemy column as moving towards its left in response to the fire of two guns placed to the left of the 1/88th. This occasioned a corresponding movement in the 1/88th, which shifted to its right. Grattan attributes the left-turn of Merle's columns as being in response to the fire of Lane's two guns placed to the left of the 1/88th, but it may have been because the column was following the foot-path up ridge. The path which Merle's column had followed takes a turn to the left as it reaches the plateau on the ridge and heads towards the 'false pass', which reflects the eye-witness accounts of the movement of Merle's columns.

As the 1/88th advanced in column, Lieutenant Colonel Wallace sent two companies under Captains Dunne and Dansey to attack the rocky point to their right. Another company under Captain Oates was ordered to attack the rocks to the left, the remaining companies then advanced against the main French column (indicated on the map by the dotted lines).[77] The 8° Infantaria's battalion under Major Birmingham had been brought up to the 1/88th's position by Picton's Assistant Quarter Master General, Captain Anderdon. In a letter to Wellington, Picton wrote, '…at this critical period, I personally led and directed their attack on the flank of the enemy's column …'.[78] This does not appear to be an attempt by Picton to gain unwarranted attention, as he continued,

73 Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814*, p.31.

74 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.633–35, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10 November 1810.

75 Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814*, p.32.

76 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.634, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10 November 1810.

77 Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814*, p.34.

78 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.634, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10th November 1810.

> Your Lordship was pleased to mention me as directing the gallant charge of the 45th and 88th regiments ; but I can claim no merit whatever in the executive part of that brilliant exploit … Lieutenant-Colonel Wallace of the 88th, and Major Gwynne, who commanded the four companies of the 45th, and were, therefore, engaged on that occasion, are entitled to the whole of the merit, and I am not disposed to deprive them of any part.[79]

The line of Allied troops consisting of the four companies of the 45th on the left, the six companies of 88th in the centre, and the 8° Infantaria to the right-rear, now advanced and attacked the French column. Merle observed Portuguese battalions to his left, and several regiments and batteries to his, presumably right, flank.[80] Grattan wrote that some of the 1/88th were hit by bullets from the Portuguese regiment which had, '…opened a distant and ill-directed fire …'[81] At the same moment the regiment of Milicia de Thomar stationed behind the 8° Infantaria broke and ran. Despite these problems, the Portuguese and British troops pushed the enemy column down the slope, leaving hundreds of enemy dead and wounded. Merle fell, '… his right arm shattered by a bullet. He was thought dead, but he got up again, and although covered with blood and suffering horribly, he remained standing on the field of battle until the end of the action …'[82] and *Général de Brigade* Graindorge was mortally hit.[83] Grattan records the French troops defending the rocks as being from the 4e Regiment, presumably the 4e Légère under Graindorge. He also mentions soldiers from the Irish Brigade, probably the Légion Irlandaise, but this regiment was part of VIII Corps, and should not have been near the action.[84]

Foy's Assault

Following the repulse of Merle's and Arnaud's attacks, *Général de Brigade* Foy recalled,

> At the time of the failure of the first attack I had waited for a minute so as not to be swept back by those running, and to give me time to draw up my troops. General Reynier arrived and cried in anger 'Why don't you climb. You can march your troops if you want. You are doing nothing!' I hadn't the presence of mind not to reply. I refuted the accusation. I said to the 70th to follow en masse and to my left, I ran to the head of the 17th and climbed the mountain …[85]

79 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.635, Picton to Wellington, Cadaceira, 10 November 1810.

80 Balagny, 'La Bataille de Bussaco', pp.134–135.

81 Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814*, p.34.

82 Élie Mazel, *Vie de Pierre-Hugues-Victor Merle* (Nimes: A Baldy, 1860), p.43.

83 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.573, État des pertes dans la journée du 27 septembre 1810. (Tués, blessés, faits prisonniers.).

84 Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814*, p.37.

85 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, p.103.

The columns advanced up the ridge to the right of the road, but according to Foy became disorganised because of the steepness and broken nature of the terrain.

Major General Leith, anticipating an order from Wellington to move in support of Picton, ordered the right-hand battalion of the 8° Infantaria to move to its left and support the defenders of the pass, followed by Brigadier General Spry's and Lieutenant Colonel Barnes' brigades.[86] He received a note from Wellington ordering his division to move to its left to support Picton, but as he was already in motion he forwarded this note to Hill and continued north. Leith's troops travelled by the military road behind the crest, so their movements could not be discerned by the enemy. On approaching the pass, the Loyal Lusitanian Legion was formed up in column in reserve, along with Spry's Brigade. Leith himself ordered Barnes' brigade forward to the point where he though the French column was making the greatest progress. They were met by fugitives from the 8° and 9° Infantaria who had broken under intense fire from the French who were occupying the plateau, and ensconced in a rocky knoll near the pass.

Lieutenant Andrew Leith Hay, ADC to Major General James Leith, wrote that the French column advanced, '… diagonally to the line of the allied army, by which its left flank was exposed to the troops arriving from the right …'[87] If Foy's columns kept to the right of the road during their ascent, they would have presented their left flank during the final climb because of the shape of the ridge at this point. Additionally, the reinforcements for the allies were approaching from the French left. Foy's brigade managed to reach the plateau, establishing groups of skirmishers amongst the rocks, and pushing back the troops at the pass. Leith Hay continues, 'On approaching the right of General Picton's position, the whole sierra presented a crowd of light troops, masses of British and French infantry, and a very warm contest in full progress. At this moment, the enemy had penetrated to the very summit of the mountain …'.[88]

Those allied troops on the plateau were disorganised, both from repulsing the first attack, and now with the advance of a second French column. However, the British 1/9th, supported by the 2/38th, had just arrived, and attacked the French at this point with a most destructive fire into their flank. Foy recalled that his brigade, continually weakened as it climbed the ridge, was met by fire from enemy troops to the front and left, forcing his leading battalions to veer to the right. Many of the officers had been hit encouraging their troops forward, and one officer, '… was particularly conspicuous, on the very highest point ; cheering, and waving his schakos [sic], he urged on his comrades, then climbing the ascent'.[89] The musketry from the British was followed up with a bayonet charge which drove the French down the slope.[90] Cohesion was lost as the French troops were caught attempting to deploy

86 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.636–39, 'Report of the Position and Movements of Major-General Leith's Corp, particularly of the British Brigade, during the Battle of Busaco, on the 27th of September, 1810'.

87 Leith Hay, *A Narrative of the Peninsular War*, p.164.

88 Leith Hay, *A Narrative of the Peninsular War*, p.163.

89 Leith Hay, *A Narrative of the Peninsular War*, p.164.

90 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.636–39, 'Report of the Position and Movements of Major-General Leith's Corp, particularly of the British Brigade, during the Battle of Busaco, on the 27th of September, 1810, 10th November 1810'.

into line, and they broke and retreated down the slope.[91] Foy was wounded in the arm by a musket ball and carried down by some of his troops and his brigade eventually rallied in the valley behind covering support.

Merle's and Heudelet's divisions had taken heavy casualties, but they were unevenly distributed amongst the regiments involved. Merle's division lost 1,049 men, 314 from the 2e Légère, 251 from the 4e Légère, and 484 from the 36e Ligne.[92] The 36e thus suffered 36 percent casualties, the 2e some 21 percent and the 4e 16 percent. The 36e seems to have taken the brunt of the allied counterattack both in terms of men lost and as a percentage of the strength of the unit. In Heudelet's division, the 31e Légère and 70e Ligne had suffered 294 (17 percent) and 313 (24 percent) respectively, with the 17e Légère losing 356 (25 percent) killed and wounded. Conversely, the 47e Ligne had lost 8 men, and the 86e Ligne none.[93]

In different reports Majors Douglas and Birmingham are said to be both with the left battalion and the right battalion of the 8° Infantaria . Grattan reported that the Portuguese posted near the 1/88th were commanded by Colonel Douglas,[94] but Picton reported that the battalion of the 8° sent to support the 1/88th was commanded by Major Birmingham. Leith reported that during the last French attack he spoke to Major Birmingham, who was on foot having had his horse killed under him, as they attempted to rally some Portuguese troops from the 8° and 9° Infantaria who were falling back.[95] Whilst it is not necessarily important who commanded which battalion, this demonstrates the difficulty of unpicking the different reports of the battle, and the confusion that can arise.

Ney's Attack

The VI Corps was deployed around Moura, and was to advance up the Buçaco ridge via the road through Sula. Ney's written orders were for the VI Corps to, '… attack the two roads leading to the road to Coimbra…'.[96] There appear to be two roads leading towards the monastery from the French positions, but they merge just beyond Sula into a single road over the ridge.[97] Guingret, a *capitaine* in the 6e Légère of Marchand's division, recalled that Massena spoke to the men of Ney's VI Corps before the battle and said, 'My friends … this mountain is the key to Lisbon, it must be won with the bayonet …'.[98] With his soldiers'

91 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, pp.103–4.

92 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.568–74, Pièces Justificatives No 5, État des pertes dans la journée du 27 septembre 1810, Certifié par le chef d'état-major général, Fririon, 2 October 1810.

93 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.568–74, Pièces Justificatives No 5, État des pertes dans la journée du 27 septembre 1810, Certifié par le chef d'état-major général, Fririon, 2 October 1810.

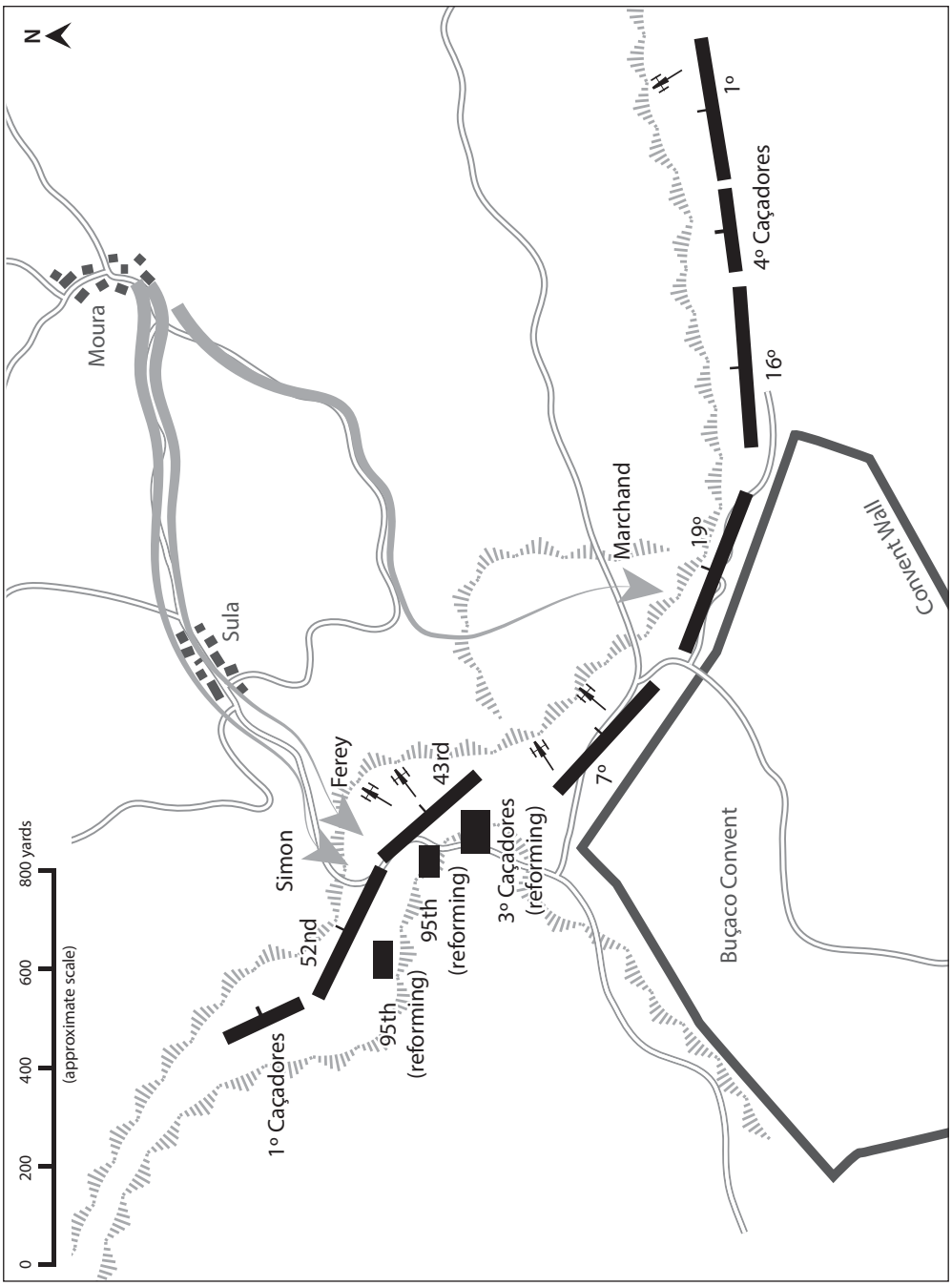
94 Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers, 1809-1814*, p.34.

95 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.636–39, 'Report of the Position and Movements of Major-General Leith's Corp, particularly of the British Brigade, during the Battle of Busaco, on the 27th of September, 1810'.

96 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.388.

97 TNA, WO 78/5966 to WO 78/5969, Sturgeon and Westmacott, 'Battle of Busaco'; TNA, WO 78/1004/1/6, 'The Battle of Busaco: General Position of the French and Allied Armies on the 26th Septr. 1810'; and 'The Attack 27th Septr. 1810'.

98 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, pp.66–67.



Map 8 Ney's attack.

encouraged, but before the outcome of the attack by Reynier's II Corps was known, Massena launched Ney's troops in an attack towards the monastery. Bonnal recalled, 'The Prince d'Essling, who was standing near Marshal Ney, gave him the verbal order to launch Loison's division to attack the heights surmounted by the convent of Busaco, at the moment when Merle's division of II Corps reached the plateau which dominates, to the south, the village of Santo Antonio de Cantaro [sic]'.[99] Mermet's division of the 25e Légère, 27e, 50e and 59e Ligne was held in reserve.

Directly opposed to Ney's corps' line of advance was the Light Division. This formation was made up at the time of two brigades of experienced British infantry with two brigades of Portuguese infantry attached. Beckwith's Brigade comprised the British 1/43rd Light Infantry, four companies of the 1/95th Rifles, and the 3° Caçadores. Barclay's Brigade consisted of the British 1/52nd Light Infantry, four companies of the 1/95th Rifles, and the 1° Caçadores. All of these were considered elite units specialising in light infantry tactics. There were only eight companies of the 95th present as two captains and several subalterns and NCOs had been sent back to Britain to recruit.[100] Coleman's Portuguese Brigade of the 7° and 19° Infantaria and the 2° Caçadores was posted to the right of the Division. Pack's Portuguese Brigade of the 1° and 16° Infantaria and 4° Caçadores was positioned to the right of Coleman, between the park wall of the convent and Pakenham's Brigade of Spencer's 1st Division. Pack's Brigade had gained a great deal of experience from working closely with the other units of the Light Division as part of the rear-guard over the past few weeks. Campbell's Portuguese Brigade, part of Cole's 4th Division, was to the left of the Light Division. The artillery attached to the Light Division was split into two half batteries of three guns each, one overlooking Sula and the other facing the village of Moura.

According to Chambers, the Allied skirmish line consisted of the British 1/95th, Portuguese 3° Caçadores and some riflemen from the KGL.[101] The rifles were certainly in the skirmish line, as Leach of the 1/95th recorded, '… as their columns of attack moved forward … we were driven gradually up the face of the mountain on our reserves'.[102] Garrety of the 1/43rd recorded that, '…the whole face of the hill was planted with the skirmishers of the [95th] Rifle corps, and of the two Portuguese Cacadore [sic] battalions'.[103] The 1/95th had eight companies in the division, totalling some 742 riflemen; the 1° Caçadores 546 and the 3° Caçadores had 656. This gives a total of approximately 1,900 men (deducting for officers listed in the Portuguese numbers) who would have been in the Allied skirmish line.

The first attack was by Loison's division, composed of Simon's 1er and Ferey's 2e Brigades: Simon's brigade consisted of the Légion du Midi, two battalions of the Légion Hanovrienne, and three battalions of the 26e Ligne; Ferey's brigade comprised one battalion of the 32e Légère, three battalions of the 66e Ligne, and two of the 82e. In all, the division totalled approximately 6,500 men, and could deploy just over 1,000 of those from the *voltigeur* companies into the skirmish line.

99 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.392.
100 Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier*, p.130.
101 Chambers, *Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco*, p.95.
102 Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier*, p.165.
103 Garrety, *Memoirs*, p.102.

Ney's artillery could not seriously affect the battle, as the range and elevation, as well as the steepness of the ridge, would reduce the effectiveness of the fire.[104] Wellington's guns were placed so that there were four, possibly five, batteries of British, Portuguese, and King's German Legion around and in front of the position near the convent, ranging from three-pounder mountain guns to nine-pounder field guns.[105] The allies had a marked superiority in artillery at this point, and it was to tell decisively in the attack.

The allied army had its skirmishers deployed on the slope of the ridge below Sula and extending southwards to link with the skirmishers from the other divisions. The troops in the woods below Sula were directly engaged by the skirmishers of Loison's division, and pushed back to and through the village.[106] There was fierce fighting in the narrow streets of Sula, with Ferey's brigade capturing the village, eventually pushing the Allied skirmishers further back up the slope. The Allied engineers had previously broken up the road leading to Coimbra via Sula, so the French columns made their way as best they could up the slope, under continuous fire from the allied skirmishers, as well as the allied artillery on their flanks. Guingret recalled Simon's brigade being to the right of Ferey as they advanced.[107] Fririon reported that Loison's division, '…organized *en masse par brigades*, attacked the enemy by climbing two paths bordering the road … Marchand's Division debouched on the left to support Loison …'.[108] Leach, a close eyewitness to the attack, describes the attacking column as being, '… wedged close in a road of no great width …'.[109] The map made by Sturgeon and Westmacott shows two large French columns advancing on the Light Division, one from Sula, presumably Ferey's brigade, and the other to the right of that column, presumably Simon's. There is a third column on the roadway from Moura to the ridge, which is likely to be Marchand's division.[110] This map agrees with Napier's observation: 'The French had now formed their columns and were moving steadily and gallantly down to the valley below in three bodies …'.[111] Pushing on up the slope, the French temporarily captured three guns of Ross's Troop whose gunners had withdrawn, but by now they were tired and disorganised from their climb, and took time to pause and regroup.[112] Still harassed by skirmish and artillery fire, the column pushed on to the crest of the ridge. As the French columns advanced, Coleman's Portuguese Brigade was moved into position to the right of the Light Division, in front of the eastern wall of the convent.[113]

The allied skirmishers of the caçadores and 1/95th fell back and took up their position in the line. According to Sturgeon's and Westmacott's map, the two brigades formed in the following manner, north to south: 4 companies 1/95th, 1° Caçadores, 1/52nd; 4 companies 1/95th, 3° Caçadores, 1/43rd. However, it is likely that these skirmishers were still re-forming

104 Hughes, *Firepower*, p.149.
105 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.33–34, Report made to the Quartermaster-General by Major Sturgeon, of the Royal Staff Corps.
106 Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs', p.451; Delagrave, *Campagne*, p.59.
107 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, p.59.
108 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.49.
109 Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier*, p.166.
110 TNA, WO 78/5966 to WO 78/5969, Sturgeon and Westmacott, 'Battle of Busaco'.
111 Napier, *Passages*, p.141.
112 Delagrave, *Campagne*, p.60.
113 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.33–34.

The view the advancing French infantry would have had just before the Light Division advanced to meet them. Just visible is the roof to 'Craufurd's Windmill' where he called upon the Light Division to repel the French attack. (Author's photo)

when the French columns reach the allied line. Craufurd, who had been standing on a rock to keep the enemy in view, now ordered the Light Division to advance.[114] The allied troops moved forward and fired a volley into the French with devastating effect, but their fire was returned by the troops at the head of the French column. The companies of the battalions which extended past the French were now wheeled down to fire into the flank of the column.[115] The brief firefight was brought to an end when the allied troops charged down onto the French with the bayonet, and forced them backwards and down the slope. Major Brotherton wrote home to his wife, 'I was lucky enough to charge with the 43 & 52 Regiments. I am well'.[116] Brotherton was a major in the 14th Light Dragoons, and was attached to Brigadier General Craufurd at the time.

Some French troops were cut off in the retreat, and were soon captured by the allies. Included in the haul was *Général de Brigade* Simon who had been at the head of the column during the attack and received two bullet wounds.[117] Angry at being captured, he challenged

114 Garrety, *Memoirs*, p.103; Napier, *Passages*, p.142.

115 Garrety, *Memoirs*, p.103; Napier, *Passages*, p.143.

116 The National Army Museum, NAM 1986-11-33-1, Thomas Brotherton, 'Letter from Major Thomas William Brotherton, 14th (or The Duchess of York's) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons, to His Wife, 30 September 1810', 30 September 1810.

117 Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs', p.451.

Craufurd to a duel, but was declined.[118] The Light Division pursued Loison's fleeing troops down the slope until they reached a brook where both sides paused to reorganise themselves and begin to collect their wounded.

There is disagreement about the path of the 32e Légère, which according to some appears to have strayed to its left on leaving Sula, and was attacked by the 19° Infantaria.[119] There is no particular reason why the 32e should have taken a different route, but the 27 percent casualties sustained by that regiment were significantly higher than the other two regiments of the brigade, the 66e and 82e which suffered eight percent and 13 percent respectively. Alternatively, there is disagreement as to whether Loison's division attacked in one or two columns,[120] but the eyewitness accounts of the French speak of Simon's brigade being to the right of Ferey's.[121] If Ferey's brigade was formed as a separate column from Simon's, with the 32e at its head, that might account for the disparity in casualties amongst the units. From the description given by Delagrave, a French officer present during the attack, Loison's division advanced as a single column after the fight through Sula. Delagrave wrote, '… the whole division charged up in a tight column, under a shower of bullets and grape shot'.[122] What may have started as two distinct brigade columns, as described by Fririon, may have melded into one large column as they advanced over rough ground.

The second attack was executed by Marchand's 1er Division comprising Maucune's brigade of the 6e Légère and 69e Ligne, and Marcognet's brigade of the 39e and 76e Ligne. According to Guingret, Marchand's division advanced three files wide under constant artillery and skirmish fire.[123] At the time that Loison's division was beginning its retreat, Marchand's division had reached the Allied line. As Loison's troops fell back, Maucune's right became exposed and his brigade pushed to the left for the cover of a wood, and consequently suffered considerable casualties. Among them, Maucune was wounded and *Colonel* Amy of the 6e Légère was killed.[124] As Maucune's troops moved to their left, they came up against Coleman's Brigade. Approaching the Portuguese troops, they were subject to a heavy fusillade and could advance no further. Marcognet's brigade was now moved in to support Maucune's brigade.[125] Attempts to outflank the lines of Portuguese were unsuccessful and resulted in a large number of casualties. Guingret was wounded in the neck and chest during just such an attack.[126] There were many casualties among the officers in Loison's and Marchand's Divisions: '… General Marchand … was wounded in the thigh, and Béchaud, Colonel of the 66e, received a bullet, which passed through his body. Amy, colonel of the 6e Légère, had his head carried away by a cannonball'.[127] The Portuguese pushed the French troops down the ridge, and pursued them to the bottom, capturing and bayonetting as they went. It is possible that during the attempts by Marcognet's troops to

118 John Kincaid, *Random Shots from a Rifleman* (London: T. and W. Boone, 1847), p.84.
119 Horward, *The Battle of Bussaco*, p.122; Chambers, *Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco*, p.11.
120 Chambers, *Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco*, pp.117–19.
121 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, pp.58–59; Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs', p.451.
122 Delagrave, *Campagne*, p.59.
123 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, p.61.
124 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.198–99.
125 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.181.
126 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, p.61.
127 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.49.

outflank Coleman's Brigade, Pack's Brigade moved in to support, and became involved in the pursuit.[128]

In Chambers' book he titles Chapter 11 'The attack by the 19th Portuguese Line Regiment on one of Ney's columns, or on a strong body of the enemy sharpshooters'.[129] The attack of the unknown French unit occurred at the right of Coleman's Brigade, which had been placed between the Light Division and Pack's Brigade. It is worth quoting Major Sturgeon's report at length here:

> Coleman's Portuguese Brigade had also moved forward, in column, towards that part of the position, on the right of the Light Division, where the Portuguese 3-pounders were; and it afterwards formed in line, in front of the eastern park-wall of the Convent, where the abattis in front of the gate, as well as the wall on each side of it, was lined with musquetry. After this, sharp-shooters were warmly engaged on both sides, particularly from our left of the village of Sul to our right of the village of Cerquedo. About nine o'clock the enemy pushed forward his sharp-shooters, in very considerable numbers, to a rocky eminence in front of the right regiment [19°] of Coleman's brigade; but that regiment repulsed them, and the whole of the brigade made a forward movement till recalled by Lord Wellington. The *Caçadores* of General Pack's Portuguese brigade also made a forward movement down the slope, but were recalled by General Pack.[130]

This extract was written in response to the instruction to officers of the Royal Staff Corps and Quartermaster General's Department, as mentioned above.[131] Thus one can assume that Sturgeon's report was compiled from observations made at the time, and is reasonably reliable. Indeed, Sturgeon's report ends, 'Having been directed … by the Quarter Master-General, to proceed with the sketch of the position I had been engaged in, I ceased to have an opportunity to observe, in a connected manner, the further operations which took place'.[132]

Thus, Coleman's Brigade was formed in line along the eastern wall of the monastery, with the 19° on the right end. This right-most regiment of Coleman's Brigade was attacked by a considerable number of enemy sharpshooters who occupied a rocky eminence to the Portuguese front. Lieutenant Colonel Macbean, commanding the 19°, commented, 'The enemy … returned to his position, where he attempted to maintain himself, but the 19° continued to move on, gave him a volley and charged, when the lines became mixed; the result was soon decided, the enemy being driven with considerable loss in killed and wounded to the bottom of the ravine'.[133] Perhaps Pelet's description explains why there seems to be disconnected attacks and mention of large numbers of sharpshooters. He wrote, '[Maucune's] brigade … after fighting for some time … found itself almost entirely dispersed

128 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.34, Report made to the Quartermaster-General by Major Sturgeon.
129 Chambers, *Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco*, p.120.
130 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.34, Report made to the Quartermaster-General by Major Sturgeon.
131 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.32, Instruction given to the Officers of the Quartermaster-General's department, Headquarters, 27 September 1810.
132 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.34, Report made to the Quartermaster-General by Major Sturgeon.
133 Quoted in Chambers, *Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco*, p.122.

into groups of skirmishers, and in the end it was necessary to support this unit with the second brigade [Marcognet's] … Thus we covered the entire slope below the convent of Bussaco … '[134] Thus, the final attack repulsed by the 19° may have been Marcognet's brigade attempting to support Maucune's.

Sprünglin was ordered by Ney to take four companies of *voltiguers* and make contact with Reynier's corps to the left. He stated, 'I always had to keep up with the two attacking columns and follow their movement, which I did for the duration of the battle …'[135] Four companies of light infantry would be inadequate to link the attacks of Ney and Reynier, unless the intention had been to act as an advanced guard to await Reynier's progress along the crest of the ridge. In the subsequent fighting, Sprünglin reported 142 killed and wounded, so seems to have been caught up in one or more of the attacks by Ney's main force.

Ney, seeing the attacks had stalled, recalled the troops and by 9:00 a.m. the attacks of VI Corps had ceased.[136] In the aftermath of Ney's attacks, Leach wrote, 'Amongst the dead in the immediate front of the Light Division, I found men belonging to the following French regiments, and I cut some buttons off their coats: — the 6th, 26th, 66th, and 82d, the Legion du Midi, and a regiment of Germans'.[137] If Leach is to be believed, and he certainly seems a reliable witness, the collection of buttons would indicate that Loison's division and at least one brigade of Marchand's Division, the 1er Brigade under *Général de Brigade* Maucune, attacked the positions held by the Light Division. Chambers cites Delagrave as stating that the 26e led the column. However, this information comes from a footnote in the edition of Delagrave's memoirs edited by Édouard Gachot, but no information like this appears anywhere in his original memoires from 1815.[138] The absence of soldiers from the 39e and 76e reinforces the idea that Marcognet's brigade attacked further south than the main line of the Light Division, in the region held by Coleman's Brigade. Additionally, the absence of the 32e Légère indicated it may have been part of the body of skirmishers in front of Coleman's Brigade.

The losses to the French brigades involved in the fighting had been serious. Marchand's division lost over 1,100 men killed and wounded from a force of approximately 6,500 men, or some 17 percent. Loison lost over 1,200 men from approximately 6,900, similarly some 17 percent.[139] Some individual units were hit harder than others: the Légion du Midi, starting the battle with approximately 560 men, suffered some 317 casualties, more than 56 percent. Some of the French casualty lists and unit returns do not appear to make sense. In the returns for 15 September, the 26e Ligne shows 1,532 men and 24 officers in three battalions. The return for 1 October gives a strength of 583 men, but the 26e reported some 283 casualties from the battle on 2 October, thus there is a discrepancy of some 666 men.[140]

134 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.181.

135 Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs', p.450.

136 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.394.

137 Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier*, p.168.

138 Delagrave, *Campagne*; André Delagrave and Édouard Gachot, *Mémoires Du Colonel Delagrave: Campagne Du Portugal 1810-11* (Paris: Ch. Delagrave, 1902).

139 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.573, Pièces Justificatives No 5, État des pertes dans la journée du 27 septembre 1810, Certifié par le chef d'état-major général, Fririon, 2 October 1810.

140 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.568–74, Pièces Justificatives No 5, État des pertes dans la journée du 27 septembre 1810, Certifié par le chef d'état-major général, Fririon, 2 October 1810.

Mermet's division had been kept in reserve, and as such had suffered almost no casualties, and was still fresh and ready. According to Ney's biographer, the French troops, '… although much tried, were by no means discouraged; so they responded with shouts of rage to the acclaim and music of the Anglo-Portuguese, who were heard on the plateau of Alcoba during a triumphal review, in the course of the afternoon, by Lord Wellington'.[141]

Once the fighting had ceased, the task of collecting the dead and wounded began. Both armies mingled whilst they collected their comrades, sometimes even exchanging conversation. As the troops reorganised, so skirmishing broke out again. D'Urban wrote, 'There was some reason to expect that about the middle of the day when the Enemy had cooked and dined, he would attack again, but this did not take place. A good deal of Skirmishing and sharp firing en tirailleur took place with the Enemy …'[142] This same scene was described by Schaumann: 'Below there was a deep ravine, and that side of it which lay behind us was studded with the brown Portuguese Caçadores, the other, on the opposite side, with enemy skirmishers, who, concealed behind rocks and withered bushes, were shooting at each other'.[143]

The firing died away during the evening, but occasionally flared as skirmishers fought for advantageous ground. Massena, having disagreed with his senior commanders about the attack earlier in the day, withdrew himself to a hamlet between VI and II Corps and spent the night alone in a peasant's house.[144] The wounded from the battle alone numbered more than 3,000, and would prove to be a heavy burden to the *Armée de Portugal* as it advanced, given its shortage of basic transport. Massena would have some difficult decisions to make in the coming days regarding their fate.

141 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.394.
142 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.149.
143 Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington*, p.249.
144 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.183–85.

9

The Retreat Was Ill Managed

The armies remained in position through the afternoon and evening of 27 September with indiscriminate skirmishing breaking out between the two armies until nightfall. Again on the 28th skirmishing broke out between the main lines.[1] Wellington believed the French would try attacking again, and spent the day apprehensively observing and awaiting information from the cavalry patrols about the enemy movements, while his army began its retreat from the ridge.[2] Massena was not prepared to resume the attack on the Buçaco position on the 28th, but now sought to manoeuvre Wellington out of his position. After the battle, he had sent cavalry patrols to reconnoitre both ends of the Buçaco ridge, looking for a way round the position.[3] He wrote to Reynier on the 28th asking him to, '… send at once all your cavalry to Ponte de Murcella and make a demonstration to draw the enemy's attention there, and make him think that the army will take that road. Tell General Soult to make as much of a show as possible'.[4]

Some accounts of the movements of the French after the battle report that the road to Boialvo was unknown to them until they were told of it by a Portuguese peasant, or it was discovered by scouts.[5] However, one of the itinerary maps issued to the army corps clearly shows the road leading from Mortagoa through Boialvo and proceeding to Mealhada, and as being suitable for vehicles.[6] The direct route taken by Massena from Viseu to Mealhada was marked on this map as being suitable for vehicles, whereas the route to Coimbra via Penacova was marked as unsuitable once it crosses the Criz. Pelet remarked that, 'General Saint-Croix had been sent toward the right by the road to Boialvo and Sardão … with twenty picked dragoons … he had favourable information and at length he passed beyond

1 Aitchison, *An Ensign in the Peninsular War*, p.119.

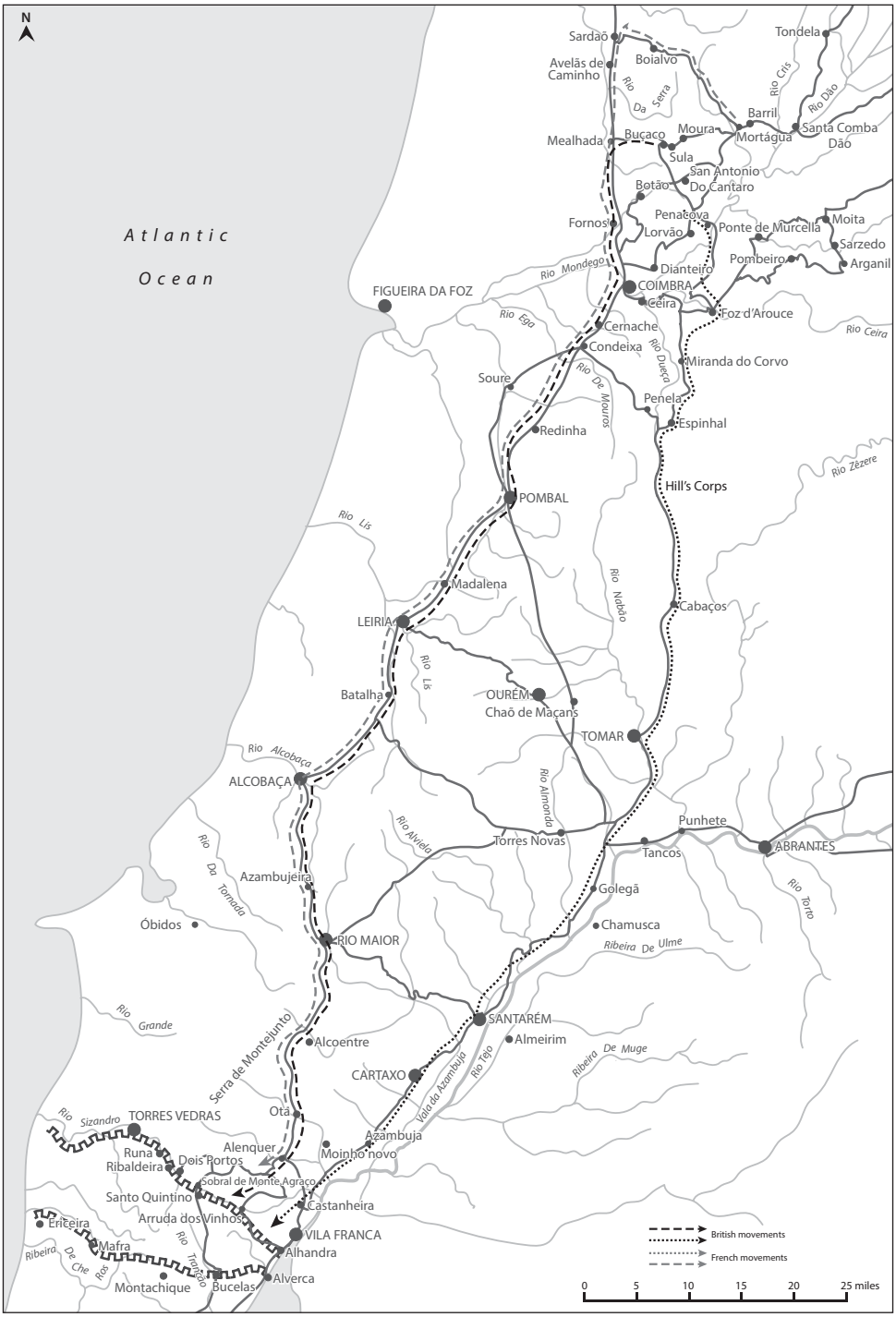
2 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.302, Wellington to Cole, On the Serra, 29 September 1810, 10 minutes before 7:00 p.m.

3 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, p.609, Copy of an intercepted letter from Massena, Coimbra, 4 October 1810.

4 Archives Nationales, Paris, 304MI/58, 'Lettre Du Marechal Massena Au General Reynier', 28 September 1810. General Pierre Soult commanded the light cavalry division of II Corps.

5 Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcelin Marbot, *The Memoirs of the Baron de Marbot*, (London: Greenhill Books, 1990) Vol.2, pp.111–19; Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula*, Vol.VI, p.119.

6 SHD, GR6 ML12 C3 N33 (1), 'Croquis Des Chemins de Viseu a Coimbra'.



Map 9 Wellington's retreat and Massena's pursuit.

the crest without finding either lines or enemy detachments'.[7] He went on to dismiss the idea suggested by Guingret that the Marquis d'Alorna had suggested this outflanking manoeuvre.[8] The patrols which were sent to Ponte de Murcella as a distraction discovered that this route was strongly defended.[9] Pelet mentioned that the reconnaissance southwards was under the command of *Capitaine* Beaufort of the II Corps, who, '… found many armed peasants supported on the heights by a few detachments of troops'.[10] These forces were posted on the heights of the Serra Murcella, on the road to Foz d'Arouce. They were Lecor's and Fane's troops, along with some King's German Legion cavalry, in this area to prevent an outflanking manoeuvre on the left bank of the Mondego.[11] They had been ordered there by Wellington on the 22nd, with piquets connecting the forces to the south of the Mondego across the bridges with those on the north. They were to observe the bridges over the Alva, but must, '… be prepared to spring the mines in these bridges if the enemy should advance'.[12] Although Pelet described the troops as peasants, there were regular troops amongst them, and their presence was sufficient to dissuade any attempt to force the position.

The French army was withdrawn towards Mortagoa, with fires lit in the woods to offer some camouflage to the troops' departure. Massena issued orders on the evening of the 28th which would send his army along the Sardão road via Boialvo,[13] outflanking Wellington's position on the Buçaco ridge, and opening up the main road from Oporto to Coimbra. In his explanation to Marshal Berthier on 4 October, Massena wrote,

> I sent cavalry reconnaissance to my right and left to examine the country and to make the enemy uncertain as to the direction of my movements. According to the reports, I decided to turn the English army by my right … along the Sardao road, crossing the Caramullo Pass, taking me to Boialvo, in an open and fertile country; this movement turned the left of the enemy and put me in a position to manoeuvre on his flank.[14]

The march along the road to Sardão took place at night to conceal the direction from the prying eyes of the allied troops still on the ridge. However, the enemy whereabouts had little impact on Wellington. He had ordered the retreat from Buçaco before he had received confirmed reports of the movements of the main body of the French army. Orders had been issued before the battle detailing the exact routes to be taken by each division and their destinations in the event of a retreat, and now these were put into effect.[15] Wellington knew that after the battle the French had pulled back from their position in front of Buçaco, but

7 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.183; See also Pelet in *Victoires, Conquêtes, Désastres, Revers Et Guerres Civiles Des Français, De 1792 À 1815* (Paris: C.-L.-F. Panckoucke, 1820), Vol.21 pp.314–44.

8 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, p.81.

9 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.201.

10 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.183.

11 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.305, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Coimbra, 30 September 1810.

12 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.295, Wellington to Lieutenant General Hill, Convent of Busaco, 22 September 1810, 8:30 p.m.

13 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.398.

14 Balagny, 'La Bataille de Bussaco', p.155, Archives du Prince d'Essling.

15 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.30–32, Circular, &c. Confidential, G Murray, QMG.

was unsure about where they were heading. Reports were coming in that the French army had sent patrols out onto both flanks looking for an unguarded way around the ridge. He had been preoccupied with his right flank, and feared the French army would cross the Mondego and cut his line of retreat. He expressed his concern in several letters written to Hill on the 28th and 29th, writing from Fornos on the 29th, '… [the French] may be about to cross the Mondego, and endeavour to force your right'.[16] If that was the case, and the French put a strong force onto the left bank, retreat through Coimbra would be impossible as the French would control the bridges and fords of the Mondego, and the main road south. On the 28th, to pinpoint the enemy movement, the cavalry patrols of Major General Fane were observing the Mondego on the right wing, and those of Lieutenant General Cotton were sent to the left towards Sardão. According to Edward Cocks, 'Intelligence was received that the 6th and 8th Corps were marching to gain the Oporto road by Boialva [sic] … I was sent to ascertain the fact but lost my road in the dark and did not reach Boialva in time'.[17]

Cocks subsequently discovered the head of the French column at Boialvo, and on the morning of the 29th Cotton reported to Wellington that Massena was indeed marching via Sardão to turn his left.[18] According to Trant, Cotton had informed him by 5:00 p.m. on the 28th that French troops had reached Boialvo, but this does not tally with Wellington's letter to Hill or Cocks' recollections.[19] The Reserve Cavalry of Montbrun's division and Junot's VIII Corps, neither of which had been engaged at Buçaco, led the advance through Boialvo towards Sardão, round the northern flank of the allied position, and on towards Coimbra. Unfortunately for the Allies, Trant's blocking force had been directed on a circuitous route which meant he only reached Sardão on the evening of 28 September, by which time the French were already in possession of it.[20] After a brief skirmish, his forces fell back northwards towards Oporto.

Wellington was aware of the risk the road to the north of the Serra do Buçaco posed to the position. On the evening of 19 September a message was sent to Marshal Beresford requesting that Trant's militia forces occupy Sardão: '… he will be on the left flank of the army, and will cover the road over the Serra leading towards Oporto'.[21] On 21 September Wellington wrote to Lie Cotton, 'We have an excellent position here … Unfortunately … there is a road upon our left by which we may be turned and cut off from Coimbra. But I do not yet give up hopes of discovering a remedy for this … misfortune …'.[22]

In anticipation of Trant's arrival at Sardão Wellington wrote on the 24th, 'We are in an excellent position, indeed one which cannot easily be attacked in front; and, if they wait another day or two, they will be unable to turn it on the only vulnerable point'.[23] But it is

16 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.302, Wellington to Lieutenant General Hill, Fornos, 29 September 1810.
17 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.82.
18 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.150.
19 Charles William Vane, Lord Londonderry, *Narrative of the Peninsular War*, 3rd ed. (London: Henry Coulburn, 1829), Vol.2, p.305, Letter from Major General Sir N. Trant to Lord Londonderry, 19 July 1828.
20 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.307, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Coimbra, 30 September 1810.
21 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.291, Lieutenant Colonel Bathurst, Military Secretary, to Marshal Beresford, Cortiçó, 19 September 1810.
22 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.294, Wellington to Lieutenant General Stapleton Cotton, Convent of Bussaco, 21 September 1810.
23 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.299, Wellington to Craufurd, Convent of Bussaco, 24 September 1810.

worth noting here that Cotton was ordered to send a patrol along this road on 24 September to,

> … obtain a report upon that road, and ascertain whether it is perfectly practicable or not for artillery. An officer should, therefore, be sent along with the patrol who is qualified to judge of the road in that respect. The patrol had better enter upon the road somewhere near Boialva, and proceed from thence towards Mortagoa, for it is desirable to avoid shewing the patrol to the enemy, or attracting his attention towards the road in question.[24]

Evidently Wellington had not overlooked the road to Sardão, but nor did he expend as much energy dealing with the only weak point of his position as he had done at other places. This vulnerability had been identified as early as 19 September, and it is probable that Wellington understood the problem before then: Buçaco had been identified as a defensible position in the orders to Lieutenant General Sherbrooke in January 1810.[25] Engineers had been working for several days on the Buçaco position building earthworks and a road. Bridges and roads in the area had been destroyed in the face of the French advance, and others had been prepared for demolition. It is therefore surprising that no action was taken to reinforce the Boialvo position or develop any defences on this road, or to make an attempt to destroy it in several places. There is also a contradiction in Wellington's expectations of Trant's force to protect this vital route. Wellington wrote after the event, 'Nothing that could have been done (excepting to detach a large corps) could have prevented the French from throwing a large force into the Serra de Caramula'.[26] If this was so, then a unit of ill-trained militia would have been unable to defend the road against Massena's troops. If, as Wellington asserted, '… if not turned, I could have maintained [the position at Buçaco] without loss of importance …'[27], why was more effort not devoted to making the northern flank as secure as the southern? Wellington had stated clearly on 24 September that, '… I shall do everything in my power to stop the enemy here'.[28] The position was strong, and Wellington had concentrated his forces sufficiently. It is easy to criticise in hindsight, but this must appear as one of Wellington's most serious mistakes of the campaign.

By the end of the 28th at Wellington's headquarters there was no official confirmation which indicated whether the French army had found a way around the position. Wellington had already ordered the retreat from Buçaco on the 28th, implementing his orders from the 25th.[29] Captain Scovell wrote on the 28th that, 'In consequence of the enemy having gone off to both flanks the Army was this morning ordered to retire… '[30] and Murray issued orders from the monastery at Buçaco that, 'The Army will retire from its present position this

24 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.29.

25 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.3, p.717, Memorandum, left with Lieutenant General Sherbrooke, Viseu, 31 January 1810.

26 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.629, Memorandum of Operations in 1810, 23 February 1811.

27 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.606–7, Wellington to Wellesley Pole, Leiria, 4 October 1810.

28 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.299, Wellington to Stuart, Bussaco, 24 September 1810.

29 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.30.

30 TNA, WO 37/7a, Scovell, 'Diary of the Campaigns of 1809 and 1810', p.94.

night … Orders are to be immediately sent to the Baggage in the Rear to move off without delay'.[31] The 1st Division was also ordered to move immediately by the road to Mealhada. These instructions cleared the rear of the army of the baggage wagons which were ordered to retreat via Coimbra, and began the process of moving the troops from the ridge; Picton's rear-guard was not to retreat until 5:00 a.m. the next morning. Still concerned about his right being turned, and his route south being blocked, he wrote to Hill on the 29th that, '… it is possible … that they may be about to cross the Mondego, and endeavor [sic] to force your right.…'[32] He added as a postscript that reports had now arrived at Headquarters confirming the French movement in strength to the left of the allied position. By then Cole's and Spencer's Divisions had already retreated as far as Fornos on the road to Coimbra, and Leith and Picton between Fornos and the Mondego. Cotton was instructed to retreat from Mealhada if the enemy descended on his troops in force, to Carquijo where Cole's division was, and Craufurd was expected to be at Botaõ.[33]

The Anglo-Portuguese army retreated in two columns. The main column marched towards Coimbra via the several roads from the west of the Buçaco position. These minor roads leading to the Oporto-Coimbra road had been reconnoitred by Lieutenants Westmacott and Shanahan of the Royal Staff Corps and Captain Scovell of the Quarter-Master General's Department as being practicable for artillery, and these officers would accompany the Divisions on their march towards that town.[34] The Coimbra-Lisbon road was well made, and would allow the army a direct route south. The other column, comprising Hill's Division, Hamilton's Portuguese Division, Lecor's Portuguese Division and Fane's Cavalry Brigade were directed to Thomar. Hill's corps was to cross the Mondego at Penacova, and by 1 October his troops should be beyond Foz d'Arouce on the River Ceira.[35] The movement of Hill's forces in this manner protected Wellington's flank, and his retreat through Coimbra and on southwards from interference by any French forces on the south bank of the Mondego river. However, Dickson reported much confusion in this column on the 29th as he moved his artillery to Penacova.[36]

Scovell was critical of the manner of the retreat from the Buçaco position, saying it was, '… ill managed …'[37] and had been vulnerable to attack because of confusion in the rear-guard. Scovell is not to be dismissed as an ignorant observer, and the speed of the retreat may have contributed to the disorganisation. Mealhada, on one of the main routes for the army to retreat by, was described as being full of troops, baggage, and '… wailing inhabitants … retreating in confusion …'.[38] Luckily the French army was marching around the position with only a few cavalry watching the Allied retreat, and while the Allied army reached the well-made Lisbon road and marched southwards, the French movement to Sardão was over

31 TNA, WO 37/10, 'Correspondence, Reports and Maps', George Murray, QMG, Bussaco, 28 September 1810.
32 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.302, Wellington to Hill, Fornos, 29 September 1810.
33 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.302, Wellington to Cotton, Fornos, 29 September 1810, 3:30 p.m.
34 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.30–32, QMG (Circular, &c. Confidential).
35 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.303, Extracts from the Instructions communicated by the Quarter Master General, Coimbra, 30 September 1810.
36 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.290.
37 TNA, WO 37/6, George Scovell, 'Diary of the Campaigns of 1809 and 1810. War Office Papers, General Sir George Scovell, Intelligence Branch of Quartermaster General in Spain'., n.d., p.97.
38 Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington*, p.253.

difficult terrain and slow: '… on the ridges, the narrow untrodden path presented so little level ground that carts were overturned'.[39] The French army descended from the mountains where they met the main Oporto to Coimbra road to find, '… a fine, wide road, passing through fertile, well cultivated country'.[40] Guingret remarked on the abundance of food and other provisions in the countryside between Buçaco and Coimbra, which must have come as a relief after the lack of supplies before the battle.[41]

The cavalry of the French advanced guard drove back the dragoons of de Grey's Brigade from around Boialvo in some confusion, forcing the rear-guard to retire to Mealhada.[42] Cocks, writing in his diary on 30 September, believed that Wellington, '… means to fall back on the ultimate position near Villa Franca'.[43] By this he meant the lines protecting Lisbon, indicating that he believed the plan was not now to offer battle, but to bring the army directly into the defences built around the capital.

Sainte-Croix's cavalry led the advance from Boialvo onto the Coimbra-Oporto road, and began the pursuit of the Allied rearguard. The French advanced guard consisted of Taupin's infantry brigade and the dragoons of the 8th Corps, all under the command of *Général de Division* Montbrun.[44] The French expected Wellington to make a stand outside Coimbra, as indeed he had alluded to in his letter to Charles Stuart,[45] but instead found only the Allied rearguard. The citizens of Coimbra had been celebrating the victory at Buçaco, but this turned to panic with the retreat of the Allied army through the town. Tompkinson described it in the following manner: 'From the short notice the people had received from Lord Wellington's proclamation, which was only issued after the retreat from [Buçaco] was determined on, and could not have been sooner made known, they had not time to remove one half, and many not any of their property'.[46]

D'Urban mentioned the, 'Infinite confusion … Fortunately the enemy is extremely cautious in advancing …'[47] To protect the army during the initial stages of the retreat, the Allied cavalry, which comprised the brigades of Anson, Slade and de Grey, was posted to the north of Coimbra on 30 September to act as the rearguard, along with the infantry of the Light Division under Craufurd. The cavalry comprised three regiments of dragoons, two of light dragoons, and one of hussars from the King's German Legion. The orders for the cavalry read:

> Lieutenant-General Sir Stapleton Cotton will be pleased to move the brigade of heavy cavalry to-day into the great plain below Coimbra; and bring one of the other two brigades of cavalry to this side of Fornos, keeping out the other brigade in front of that place. If pressed by the enemy he will move the whole of the cavalry division

39 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.100.
40 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.101.
41 Barrès, *Memoirs of a French Napoleonic Officer*, p.144; Guingret, *Relation Historique*, p.81.
42 Tomkinson, *Diary*, pp.44–45.
43 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.84, 30 September.
44 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.205–6.
45 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.289, Wellington to Charles Stuart, Cortiçó, 18 September 1810.
46 Tomkinson, *Diary*, pp.46–47.
47 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.157.

> into the great plain; and, if necessary, he will retire across the Mondego by the fords in the neighbourhood of Cazas Novas …[48]

Anson's Brigade camped at Fornos, the two others on the plains outside Coimbra. Anson's troops had bivouacked in a position where retreat was only possible by one road across the bridge at Fornos; according to Tomkinson, '… We were in a very improper position, and might easily have been surprised'.[49] Montbrun realised the situation and ordered Sainte-Croix to press the Allied cavalry hard until they were over the Mondego.[50] The French advanced guard, comprising most of the cavalry of the army, threatened to overwhelm the allied cavalry at Fornos, which retreated in some haste to the plain in front of Coimbra, joining the other two brigades. Tomkinson wrote, 'We first walked, then trotted, and at last galloped, and at this rate went through the village of Fornos, and half a mile further, on to the plain of Coimbra'.[51] Captain Krauchenburg, a renowned warrior from the 1st KGL Hussars, was wounded in the retreat. Wellington was to write to Cotton a few days later, 'I saw Krauchenburg on the road, and he was tolerably well'.[52]

There was now a pause while the opposing forces of cavalry regarded one another across the plain, but with the arrival of the French infantry under Taupin Cotton finally ordered a retreat towards the fords over the Mondego. They were closely pursued by the French cavalry, with the brigades of Anson and Slade being particularly hard pressed, fighting with the enemy over the ford below Coimbra, and losing several men in the action.[53] Cocks wrote to a relative, '… at the passage of the Mondego … I was more sharply engaged than I have been at any time this year …'[54] The infantry of the Light Division, which had been drawn up directly in front of Coimbra, also retired, moving through the town and across the bridge, pressing into the mass of civilians still trying to escape. George Napier recalled, '… we moved along, driving this immense multitude of unhappy people before us'.[55] The Allied cavalry suffered some losses during the retreat over the Mondego, but by the end of the day had reached Soure. Wellington ordered Cotton to retain possession of this place, '… as long as it can be held without risk'.[56] A stubborn resistance by the Allied rearguard would allow the infantry to make good their escape, and although it took a few days for the Anglo-Portuguese army to shake itself into some kind of order, the rearguard maintained its discipline throughout. Scovell was unimpressed by the speed and organisation of the withdrawal, commenting that the cavalry had been mishandled on 1 October during the retreat, and in addition, '… many stores were destroyed and the Troops much harassed in consequence'.[57] Indeed, Sir Stapleton Cotton had been slow in responding to reports that his piquets and advanced

48 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.34–36, G. Murray, QMG, Coimbra, 30 September, 1810.
49 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.45.
50 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.70; Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.84; Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.46.
51 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.46.
52 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.310, Wellington to Cotton, Pombal, 2 October 1811.
53 Tomkinson, *Diary*, pp.46–47.
54 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.84, To Captain Somers Cocks, Camp of Leyria, 5 October 1810.
55 Napier, *Passages*, p.150.
56 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.36, Arrangements for the further movements of the centre and left of the army, G Murray, QMG, Condeixa, 1 October 1810.
57 TNA, WO 37/7a, Scovell, 'Diary of the Campaigns of 1809 and 1810', p.1.

units were under threat, and the lack of reports from him to headquarters of the approach of the French meant the army was ill-informed of the enemy's movements.[58]

The French VIII Corps entered Coimbra on the afternoon of 1 October, as the Anglo-Portuguese rear-guard was leaving. Looting began almost immediately, with much valuable food destroyed by the French. Large stocks of food and other supplies which had been left in Coimbra, and could have sustained Massena's army for up to three weeks,[59] were wasted before order in the town could be restored.[60] Taupin's brigade had been amongst the first infantry units into Coimbra, closely followed by men from the other corps. Pelet recorded, 'I was astonished to see the city filled with drunken men and plunderers. Houses were broken into, shops upset, nothing was left untouched'.[61] Noël entered Coimbra on 1 October and wrote, 'When we entered the town it was almost completely deserted, the houses all shut up. A few hours later it resembled nothing more than a scene of utter ruin … I saw officers of the staff, axe in hand, hacking open the shop doors and placing sentries inside, so that they could loot at their leisure'.[62] He blamed Junot for failing to stop the looting, as did Massena, and on 2 October Junot was ordered to move his troops out of Coimbra to Cernache.[63]

Pelet wrote that he was, '… extremely busy during our stay at Coimbra, even more so than during the marches. It was necessary to make reports to Paris, orders, and those eternal maps based on intelligence reports'.[64] According to Pelet, 'The arrangements for the defence and administration of Coimbra took three full days, and it was on the fourth that we were able to leave the city'.[65] This self-imposed delay had allowed the allies to retreat unmolested.

In preparation for the march to Lisbon from Coimbra a new advanced guard was formed under the command of Montbrun, by a General Order from Massena on 3 October. Strong in cavalry, it comprised Sainte-Croix's dragoon brigade from VIII Corps, Soult's and Lamotte's light cavalry from II and VI Corps respectively, and Taupin's infantry brigade from VIII Corps.[66] Dragoon regiments from the reserve cavalry would be assigned to the corps for security duty to replace their cavalry.

Before leaving the town, Massena made the difficult decision to leave more than three thousand sick and wounded at Coimbra, protected by a small company of naval troops.[67] Ney warned that they would be liable to be slaughtered if a strong garrison was not left in the town, but Massena did not have the troops to spare.[68] As the French army marched south, Trant moved into the town and occupied it. After a short but fierce fight the enemy wounded and sick left there by Massena were captured, along with the small garrison. It seemed as though Ney's warning would indeed come to pass, and some historians have described a

58 Tomkinson, *Diary*, pp.45–46; d'Urban, *Journal*, p.152.
59 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.207.
60 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.202.
61 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.201.
62 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, pp.101–2.
63 SHD, 7C10, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance'; Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.210.
64 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.210.
65 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.211.
66 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.402; Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.211.
67 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.585. Fririon certified 3,506 sick and wounded at Coimbra. État Sommaire des Blessés et Malades Laissés a l'Hopital De Coïmbre.
68 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.401.

massacre of the French troops at Coimbra by the forces under Trant,[69] but there is little hard evidence to support this. In his report to Napoleon, Foy wrote simply that, '… two thousand five hundred wounded and sick who had been left in the city were taken prisoner by Portuguese troops from the North of Portugal'.[70] Serving officers in the French army recorded the capture of the hospital and its occupants, and perhaps the mistreatment of the wounded, but not a massacre.[71] In his report to Beresford, Trant reported, '… not more than six or eight Frenchmen were the victims …'[72] of the Portuguese. The ultimate fate of the majority of the prisoners was to be taken to Oporto and thence to England as prisoners of war.[73]

The retreat of the Anglo-Portuguese army from Coimbra was not as orderly as Wellington might have hoped. According to Schaumann, 'The retreat … to the fortified lines, over a stretch of thirty leguas, presented a sad spectacle. The roads were littered with smashed cases and boxes, broken wagons and carts, dead horses and exhausted men'.[74] On leaving Coimbra, Pelet recorded seeing the, '… debris of enemy wagons, a few stragglers, and a large number of dead horses'.[75] Lemonnier-Delafosse also mentioned the number of dead horse and abandoned caissons as being an indication of the hastiness of the Allied march.[76] Because of the speed of the retreat, the Allied commissariat tried to destroy or distribute stores which could not be moved. Captain Kincaid reported the distribution of shoes and shirts as he passed through Condeixa on 1 October, as well as the streets running with rum.[77] Schaumann wrote, 'Here a supply of victuals, shirts, boots and horseshoes was distributed amongst the troops marching through, and what was left was burned'.[78] Not all was destroyed at Condeixa, as Noël records: '… we found large stores of oats, bacon and wine that the retreating English had not had time to destroy. Condeixa was a warehouse for English goods'.[79] As Tomkinson travelled southwards through Soure he wrote, 'The manufactory of hats is left full. Tea, sugar, wine, rum, etc, all left in the houses'.[80] The advancing French troops took full advantage of the windfall, but much of it was squandered.

Wellington had ensured his main route of retreat would not be cut off, protected as it was by Hill moving along the road to the east via Espinhal on the way to Thomar.[81] The French delay in moving beyond Coimbra also gave his army a head start, but straggling was to become a particular problem for both armies, and Kincaid wrote of his raw troops, '… the company with which I had just arrived were much distressed to keep pace with

69 Buttery, *Wellington against Massena*, p.109; Marbot, *The Memoirs of Baron de Marbot*, Vol.2, p.124.
70 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, p.343.
71 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, p.92; Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.207–8.
72 Arquivo Histórico Militar, PT/AHM/DIV/1/14/006/05, 'Correspondência (Cópia) de Nicolau Trant Para o Marechal Beresford Sobre o Ataque Às Tropas Francesas Na Cidade de Coimbra e Mealhada'., 7 October 1810; *The London Gazette*, 20 November 1810, Extraordinary edition, Report by Nicholas Trant, dated 7 October, 1810, at Coimbra.
73 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, p.346.
74 Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington*, p.261.
75 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.211.
76 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.7.
77 Kincaid, *Adventures*, p.18.
78 Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington*, p.258.
79 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.102.
80 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.47.
81 TNA, WO 37/7a, Scovell, 'Diary of the Campaigns of 1809 and 1810', p.1, 2 October 1810.

the old campaigners – they made a tolerable scramble for a day or two …'.[82] Although the main body of the allied army was not threatened by the French advance, the straggling and disorder amongst the troops increased to a point where a general order was issued on 3 October in which, 'General officers commanding divisions are requested to direct the Provost Marshal … to punish any man who may be found straggling … [and] there may be an inspection of the soldier's packs …'.[83] On the same day a general order announcing the execution of two soldiers for looting was issued.[84] Captain Kincaid recorded, '… an English and a Portuguese soldier dangling by the bough of a tree – the first summary example I had ever seen of martial law.[85] Had the French army been able to press the allied retreat more closely, they could have taken advantage of the apparent disorder.

The French pursuit initially was slow. Massena had kept the bulk of his troops between Coimbra and Condeixa for three days after occupying Coimbra.[86] At first the French believed that some allied troops had retired via Figueira, intending to embark aboard ship, and the advanced guard sent patrols to this town. The allies had used Figueira as an embarkation point for taking the wounded and sick from Coimbra to Lisbon.[87] This was the route by which Kincaid had been evacuated after being wounded at the battle on the Coa.[88] After ordering the retreat, and not wishing for any of the stores or transports to fall into French hands, on 30 September Wellington had written to Captain Daniel of HMS *Jasper* at Figueira, '… to order all ships having on board troops and stores to proceed to the Tagus'.[89] The French, finding no enemy at the port, turned and moved on Pombal.[90] As they advanced, Pelet began making maps of positions on the road from Coimbra to Leiria as a precaution against future events: he thought they would make good rear-guard defences. He also worked hard to maintain the itinerary maps so important to the movements of the army.[91]

Although there was some minor skirmishing between the advanced and rear guards of the respective armies, the French advanced guard was not in close contact with the Allied rearguard until 5 October, when the allied piquets were driven in on the Rio de Madalena north of Leiria.[92] The cavalry of both sides skirmished throughout the day, the French finally pushing the allied troops out of Leiria in the evening. The French continued the pursuit the next day, reaching Carvalhos.[93] Scovell noted, 'The Cavalry has been skirmishing daily with the enemy and the day we left Leiria we made 3 Officers Prisoner, and lost one'.[94] Arriving

82 Kincaid, *Random Shots from a Rifleman*, pp.85–86.
83 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.311, General Order, Leiria, 3 October 1810.
84 Gurwood (ed.), *General Orders*, pp.213–14.
85 Kincaid, *Adventures*, p.18.
86 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.211–14.
87 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.287, The Adjutant General to Major Marston, Assistant Quarter Master General, Coimbra, 17 September 1810.
88 Kincaid, *Adventures*, p.94.
89 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.310, Wellington to Capt. Daniel, HMS Jasper, off Figueira, Coimbra, 30 September 1810.
90 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.211.
91 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.211.
92 Tomkinson, *Diary*, pp.47–48.
93 Tomkinson, *Diary*, pp.48–49.
94 TNA, WO 37/7a, Scovell, 'Diary of the Campaigns of 1809 and 1810', p.3, 6 October 1810.

at Leiria on 7 October, Guingret was struck by the appeal of the town, including its library. However, he noted once more the absence of Portuguese civilians.[95]

As the retreat continued, the allied cavalry piquets were surprised by the French at Alcoentre on the 8th, which nearly resulted in the loss of Captain Bull's Troop RHA. This artillery unit had been billeted in the town, which came under attack by the French advanced guard. It was only the quick intervention of some of the 16th Light Dragoons, and a squadron of the Royals, which gave them time to retreat. Tomkinson wrote, 'On our way down we met five of the guns coming up in the greatest confusion, some with four, some with six horses to them, having got away how they could'.[96] As the artillery escaped in confusion the two bodies of cavalry clashed in the narrow streets, with the French cavalry finally withdrawing after some losses.[97] The allied cavalry withdrew, and the French occupied Alcoentre where they found, '… many cases of biscuit, 35 barrels of powder, flints, axes and pioneering tools'.[98] Sir Stapleton Cotton was once again blamed for the near disaster, failing to respond to warnings about the advance of the enemy, even though sufficient information had been passed to him to allow orders for a retreat to be carried out in a timely manner.[99]

The skirmishes between Buçaco and reaching the defensive lines at Lisbon were a continual drain on the strengths of both the French and Anglo-Portuguese cavalry units, who constantly bickered over villages, bridges, and fords. On reaching the safety of the lines, Cocks wrote, 'We had been almost constantly in the field without even tents for nearly four months, and our late, long marches had completely worn out our [horse] shoes. Two or three days more would have ruined us by laming every horse …'.[100] Losses had not been high in any individual skirmish, but had been a constant drain on the numbers in the regiments over the days of the retreat. Moving into the lines around Lisbon meant that the cavalry could rest and refit and bring in replacements of both men and horses.

As the French advanced south suspicions began to be raised regarding the defences around Lisbon. Pelet wrote, 'It was said that the enemy was entrenched at Alhandra and Bucelas. Reynier and Foy had a map showing the area from Rio Maior to Lisbon; it was some kind of drawing done quickly and based on good information, but the sketch was very poor. Richoux was with General Reynier copying it'.[101] But the frustration at the lack of information was evident. Pelet wrote, 'We stopped at Moinho Novo, a hamlet situated on both banks of a broad but shallow valley. The map indicated a road on the right slope but there was none … we had all those Portuguese with us, and we had to discover it ourselves'.[102]

Pelet recorded the first indications the French received about the defences outside Lisbon: 'The first notions, initially very confused, came to us on October 7 and more specifically on the 9th, for I copied it in my Journal after our departure from [Coimbra]'.[103] Pelet had

95 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, pp.88–89.
96 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.50.
97 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.85; Tomkinson, *Diary*, pp.50–51.
98 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.220.
99 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.51.
100 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.87, 11 October 1811.
101 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.218.
102 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.220.
103 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.222.

ESTREMADURA
ALEMTEJO
CORREGIMENTO
DE LISBOA
TORRES VEDRAS
CORREGIMENTO
DE ALENQUER
BEIRA
PROVINCIA
DE
TRAS
OS
MONTES
ENTRE
DOURO
E
MINHO
Oporto
Coimbra
Santarem
Lisboa
Setuval
Alenquer
Torres Vedras
Caldas
Obidos
Peniche
Thomar
Abrantes
Leiria
Aveiro
Viseu
Guarda
Castello Branco
Portalegre
Evora
Elvas
Campo Mayor
Badajoz
Almeida
Ciudad Rodrigo
Salamanca
Valladolid
Zamora
Toro
Tuy
Valença
Braga
Barcellos
Ponte de Lima
Viana
Caminha
Monsanto
Ourem
Thomar
Rio Mayor
Cartaxo
Azambuja
Villa Franca
Alhandra
Villa Nova
Sobral
Montachique
Mafra
Cintra
Collares
Belem
Aldea Gallega
Setuval
Palmella
Azeitão
Sines
Cabo de Espichel
Cabo da Roca
Cabo de Sines
Cabo de S. Vincente
Cabo de Roca
Cabo Carvoeiro
Cabo Mondego
Cabo Finisterre
Cabo Ortegal
Cabo de Penas
Cabo de Tortosa
Cabo de Palos
Cabo de Gata
Cabo de Trafalgar
Cabo de Tarifa
Cabo de Espartel
Cabo de Noé
Cabo Blanco
Cabo Bojador
Cabo Verde
Cabo de Bona Esperança
Cabo de Boa Esperança
Cabo de Boa Esperança
Cabo de Boa

dismissed the idea of substantial defences on the route to Lisbon because, '… the maps marked this expanse [between the Tagus and the Atlantic coast] as nine to sixteen leagues and almost as flat as it had been represented to us. (Lopéz's map indicated some ten leagues from Vilafranca to the sea by Torres Vedras …)'.[104] Lopéz does indeed show the peninsula as being relatively flat, with a spine of hills reaching from Torres Vedras down to Bellas. The region between Santarem and Lisbon is shown as open terrain with several roads leading to the capital. This gives credence to the accounts of how surprised the French were on encountering the defensive works.

The weather now began to affect movement as the rains came. The change in the weather further limited the number of routes available to the French, with many unpaved roads becoming impracticable for movement.[105] Scovell wrote, 'It has rained without intermission since the 8th, and all roads except the paved ones are literally impassable'.[106] Montbrun's advanced guard moved towards Sobral in the worsening weather, and encountered a unit of allied hussars supported by several infantry battalions.[107] Montbrun reported his findings back to headquarters at Alenquer. In the deteriorating conditions, VIII Corps was given orders on the 12th to march from Alcoentre to Sobral, pushing back Pack's Portuguese troops who were in position between Sobral and Alenquer.[108] It was now the French caught their first sight of the defences at Monte Agraçio.[109]

Sobral

The delay imposed on the French invasion by the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, as well as the stay at Viseu and Coimbra, had allowed the defences around Lisbon to be completed before the French arrived at them. At Coimbra on 30 September Fletcher had written to Jones, '…that every precaution should be taken at and near our works for their being immediately occupied and defended …'[110] Jones replied to Fletcher, '… every preparation for an instant defence of the lines is complete, and you need be under no apprehension for our credit, even if the enemy attack as the rear division enters the works'.[111]

The Lopéz map shows the road from Alenquer to Lisbon passing through Bucellas, which gives the impression that this road is the most direct route to the capital, passing to the north-west of a tributary of the Tagus. The road from Villa Franca to Lisbon appears to stop at this estuary, whereas in fact this was a bridge across the tributary at Sacavém. Neither Sobral nor the surrounding hills are marked on Lopéz's map, which presents the approach to Lisbon as open countryside.

104 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.223.
105 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.325–27, Wellington to Craufurd, S. Quintino, near Sobral, 11 October 1810, 11:30 a.m.
106 TNA, WO 37/7a, Scovell, 'Diary of the Campaigns of 1809 and 1810', p.5, 10 October 1810.
107 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.82.
108 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.222.
109 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.407.
110 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.234, Fletcher to Jones, Coimbra, 30 September.
111 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.252, Jones to Fletcher, Alhandra, 6 October 1810.

The defensive works around Sobral covered the road to Lisbon via Bucellas, as well as the road from Sobral to Arruda, and the lateral road along the front of the first line. The defences facing Sobral consisted of the Forte de Alqueidão (number 14, sometimes known as 'The Great Redoubt') and several smaller defensive works called Muchado, Trinta and Simplício (numbers 15, 16, and 17) which were to be garrisoned by Pack's Portuguese Brigade. In addition, Fort Novo (number 152) supported Alqueidão, with two forts at Patameira (numbers 150 and 151) across the valley. Once the French had reached the Lines, Wellington rode to Forte de Alqueidão each day to watch them, and also to await any messages from the other forts via the telegraph system.[112]

These forts could clearly be seen as the French attempted to move south from Sobral. They appear to have come as a complete surprise to the French, as did the terrain upon which they were sited. Pelet examined the ground around Sobral, concluding that his maps and drawings were inaccurate. He recorded the defences on Monte Agraço as being, '… a large of work 360 to 400 yards' deployment with 14 to 15 feet of relief … covered with seventeen embrasures'.[113] Junot had previously spent several months in Lisbon, and had fought two battles against Wellington in the area (Roliça and Vimiero), and should have been aware of the type of country.[114] According to the diary of *Général de Brigade* Manuel Pamplona who served on Massena's staff, Massena was furious that no information had been given to him about the topography of the country north of Lisbon. Although no-one in the French army knew about the defensive works, the topography should have been well known. Massena reportedly responded to the excuses of his advisors by saying, 'What the devil! Wellington didn't make the mountains!'[115]

Wellington initially distributed his forces across the Lisbon peninsula, with Picton's 3rd Division and Campbell's and Coleman's Portuguese Brigades at Torres Vedras. Leith's 5th Division was at Enxara dos Cavalleiros, with Major General Alexander Campbell's newly-formed 6th Division at Ribaldeira and Cole's 4th at Dois Portos. Spencer's 1st Division, posted at Sobral, had the 14th Light Dragoons and Pack's Portuguese Brigade in front. The Light Division was at Arruda, connecting with Hill's 2nd Division at Alhandra.[116] Thus each division was allotted a sector of the defences to protect, but could be moved to support any other sector should it come under attack. The Serra de Montejunto divided the peninsula in two, reducing the ability of the French to quickly move troops laterally, and minimising the chances of an attack on the north-eastern part of the lines around Torres Vedras. As the French concentrated around Sobral, the Allied divisions in that area were ordered back behind the first line of defences.[117]

Wellington observed the French as they reconnoitred Sobral on 11 October, '… with a large body of cavalry and some infantry; and, by mistake, our troops left the place, and I believe neither party were in it during the night'.[118] D'Urban wrote, '… a company of the

112 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.333, Wellington to Craufurd, Ajuda, 15 October 1810; Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.34.

113 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.227.

114 Hulot, *Souvenirs Militaires Du Baron Hulot, Général d'Artillerie, 1773-1843*, p.233.

115 Marshall-Cornwall, *Marshal Massena*, p.218.

116 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.326, Distribution of the allied army on 10 October 1810.

117 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.327, Memorandum for Lieutenant General Spencer, 11 October 1810.

118 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.328, Wellington to Stuart, Ajuda, 12 October 1810.

The view towards Sobral from within Forte de Alqueidão. (Author's photo)

One of the military roads Fletcher had built to provide access to Forte de Alqueidão. This type of road was constructed all along the defensive lines. (Author's photo)

The remains of the defences at Cego near Arruda dos Vinhos. (Author's photo)

Defences at Fort Sao Vicente near Torres Vedras. (Author's photo)

95th who were in the Town and the Vineyards about it abandoned it without a shot …'[119] The allies reoccupied it on the morning of the 12th, 'The heights above Sobral were taken by the 71st and 95th; and a company of the 50th in the Town'.[120] On the evening of the same day, troops of Clausel's division forced the advanced posts of the allies from Sobral.[121] The retiring allied troops remained on the lower slopes of Monte Agraço while the French constructed defences on the outskirts of the town facing them. Here, Jones relates,

> The several divisions of the allies, as soon as posted on their ground, diligently employed themselves further to strengthen their respective fronts, particularly those forming the main body of the army between Monte Agraça [sic] and Runa, along which space no artificial defences had been previously established; the support of the advanced works by troops not having been contemplated in the original project for the lines.[122]

Wellington, mindful of the strength of the French forces developing in front of Sobral ordered Cole and Campbell to support Spencer. Picton was also made ready to move in support if necessary. Pack's Brigade comprising the 1° and 16° Infantaria and the 4° Caçadores occupied the redoubts above Sobral, with his light infantry in redoubts Nos. 11, 12, and 13 above the road to Arruda.[123] Pack received orders on 12 October, '… to send an officer round to the 3 redoubts occupied by the Caçadores, and see that they are either in their stations or near them, and that the artillerymen are there likewise; and that these people are supplied with provisions'.[124] Pack was even assigned an engineer, Captain Williams, to instruct him in all the details of the redoubt. These instructions were repeated to other units ensuring the Portuguese troops were deployed in the redoubts along the Lines, supported by the divisions of the field army.

The French now pushed forward against the troops of Cole and Spencer, probing for weak points and routes past the Allied defensive positions. There was fighting at Caxeria, where Solignac was attempting to secure his right flank from the threat of envelopment by allied troops in the village.[125] The Portuguese 11° and 23° Infantaria under Colonel Harvey were heavily involved in this combat, which resulted in Harvey being wounded.[126] Wellington had written to Major General Cole at 2:00 p.m. warning him not to become too seriously engaged with the enemy, and if necessary to fall back and blow up the bridge at Dois Portos.[127]

This was the first time on the retreat from Buçaco that the allied infantry had concentrated in front of the French advance. Expectations in the French army were that the allies

119 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.156.
120 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.156.
121 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.225; Leith Hay, *A Narrative of the Peninsular War*, p.174.
122 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.31.
123 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.327, Memorandum for Lieutenant General Sir B Spencer, 11 October 1810; *ibid*. Vol.4, pp.328–29, Wellington to Pack, Ajuda, 12 October 1810, 2:00 p.m.
124 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.329, Wellington to Pack, Ajuda, 12 October 1810, 2:00 p.m.
125 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.226.
126 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.331, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Ajuda, 13 October 1810.
127 TNA, PRO 30/43/57, 'Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole: Papers', 1810, Letter from Wellington to General Cole, At the Great Redoute, 13 October 1810.

were heading for their boats, so the extent and strength of the defences at Lisbon, coupled with the allied army forming up and standing its ground, brought the French up short. Noël recalled, 'We imagined that we should continue to drive them along as far as the Tagus and the sea, where we should force them to fight or re-embark. Suddenly, as we left Sobral, we found ourselves confronted by a strong defensive line … This came as a terrible shock to us …'[128]

It was clear to the French commanders that a deliberate attack would need to be undertaken in order to breach the defences, or at the least to probe their strength and extent. The French prepared to strike on the 14th, aiming to assault the positions on the heights of Monte Agraço overlooking Sobral. Overnight of the 13th/14th French artillery was positioned to support the attack, and concealed behind large barrels. 'General Clausel ordered me, overnight, to position a battery of four guns to cover the attack that was to take place the next day. This I did, concealing the guns under great barrels'.[129] This work was some 150 yards from the entrenchment of the 71st, and was, '…constructed of casks, doors, and planks, brought from Sobral'.[130] The attack was to be carried out by the 4/19e Ligne of Menard's brigade, a unit made up mainly of conscripts. They were observed by Massena, Ney, and Junot, who arrived at Sobral on a reconnaissance. A rocket was fired from the French redoubt to start the attack and the guns were unmasked. D'Urban wrote in apparent surprise that, 'The enemy was discovered to have some Guns behind his Barricades of Casks …'[131] A soldier of the 1/71st Highland Light infantry, newly arrived, recorded, '… we joined the army at Sabral de Monte Agraco [sic], a small town surrounded by hills. On the front is a hill, called by our men Windmill Hill, from a number of windmills which were upon it; in the rear, another they called Gallows Hill, from a gibbet standing there'.[132]

As the 1/71st settled down to cook the alarm was sounded and the regiment formed up under arms along with the light companies of other battalions. The French guns fired at the breastworks behind which the 1/71st was taking cover. An exchange of musketry followed, and then, 'The French infantry, after this preamble, rushed forward with their usual impetuosity, reaching the embankment unchecked …'[133] They made good progress at first, Noël recording that the grenadiers and infantrymen captured the enemy trench.[134] Now the 1/71st counter-attacked, pushing the enemy back all the way to Sobral. Pelet wrote, 'We cannonaded the enemy trench and chased them out. Then they drove us out rather vigorously'.[135] The fighting died down towards evening when Massena gave the order to cease fire and withdraw.[136]

On the morning of the 15th Spencer drew in his outposts around Sobral and Santo Quintina, Junot's VIII Corps, '… succeeded in remaining master of its positions near and

128 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.104.
129 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.104.
130 Leith Hay, *A Narrative of the Peninsular War*, p.174.
131 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.157.
132 Anon. *Journal of a Soldier of the Seventy-First* (Edinburgh: William and Charles Tait, 1819), p.111.
133 Leith Hay, *A Narrative of the Peninsular War*, p.175.
134 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.104.
135 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.231.
136 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.231.

around Sobral …'[137] Wellington wrote to Hill, expressing his doubts about the intentions of Massena: 'I don't think the enemy's designs are yet quite clear, but they rather point to our centre, where they have assembled a large corps …'[138] For the following several days Massena and his staff reconnoitred the defensive positions in front of them. Reduced by fatigue, hunger and sickness, the army was judged to be incapable of assaulting the Lines, and so orders were then given by Massena to consolidate the army's positions, collect food and other supplies, and impose a land blockade on Lisbon.[139] Magazines were to be established in Santarem, and materials to build a bridge across the Tagus above the town were to be collected.

In the Lines and before the Lines

At the end of September Wellington's army amounted to more than 61,000 men, including sick and garrison troops.[140] He had retreated to the Lines with six infantry divisions, several independent brigades of Portuguese, some 4,000 cavalry, and 78 artillery pieces of various calibre. By the time the allied army had reached the Lines, and including the losses sustained at Buçaco and during the retreat, the army numbered more than 66,000, which now included two Spanish divisions. The numbers would continue to increase as more reinforcements were received, and a new division was formed, the 6th, under Major General Alexander Campbell, comprising the British 2/7th, 1/11th and 2/53rd, 1 company of the 5/60th, 2 battalions of the Loyal Lusitanian Legion and the 8° Infantaria.[141] Other divisions received reinforcements and a reorganisation was undertaken which saw some units moved from one division to another to create a balanced force where newly arrived units were mixed with more experienced troops. Problematically, some reinforcements were subject to more sickness than those already in Portugal. Troops that had been in the Walcheren expedition were subject to bouts of 'Walcheren Fever' or a combination of malaria with typhus, typhoid and other diseases.[142]

The two armies watched each other across the valley between the positions. Wellington explained his inactivity:

> I feel that I must not lose a great battle; and I believe Massena has very much the same feeling respecting his situation … I have determined to persevere in my cautious system, to operate upon the flanks and rear of the enemy with my small and light detachments, and thus force them out of Portugal by the distresses they will suffer, and do them all the mischief I can upon their retreat.[143]

137 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.87.
138 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.333, Wellington to Lieutenant General Hill, Ajuda, 15 October 1810.
139 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.242–43; Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.232.
140 Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War*. Vol.4, pp.544–48, Appendix X.
141 TNA, WO 37/10, 'Correspondence, Reports and Maps', Brigading of the Army in Portugal, 9 October 1810.
142 John Lynch, 'The Lessons of Walcheren Fever, 1809', *Military Medicine* 174, No.3 (2009), pp.315–319.
143 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.7, p.2, Wellington to Wellesley Pole, Cartaxo, 8 December 1810.

His 'cautious system' would receive criticism from many, on both sides, for not engaging in a battle to defeat the French conclusively. Pelet expressed his dissatisfaction with Wellington's strategy, dismissing it as inactive and timid.[144] Even senior officers on the Allied side were, if not impatient, then certainly of the opinion that some activity to discomfit the French was in order. Towards the end of October D'Urban wrote, 'If it were not presumptuous, one would be inclined to think [the French] are left too quiet, they may detach or do as they please, certainly their posts might be driven in, and their Right made very anxious without compromising our defensive attitude'.[145]

The Portuguese Regency Council, under the 'Principal Sousa', had complained about the need to fight a battle on the frontier with Spain.[146] In much the same way as the British government had tried to interfere in the development of Wellington's strategy in 1809 and early 1810, so now the Portuguese Regency Council did the same. After much provocation, Wellington had written to Charles Stuart, Britain's representative on the Council,

> I beg that you will do me the favor [sic] to inform the Regency, and, above all, Principal Sousa, that His Majesty and the Prince Regent having intrusted [sic] me with the command of their armies, and exclusively with the conduct of the military operations, I will not suffer them, or any body else, to interfere with them ; that I know best where to station my troops, and where to make a stand against the enemy, and I shall not alter a system framed upon mature consideration, upon any suggestion of theirs. I am responsible for what I do, and they are not …[147]

This difference of opinion exploded into a full political crisis in late 1810 and early 1811 when the Conde de Linhares, Sousa's brother and Minister of State in Rio de Janeiro, wrote a scathing letter suggesting the Portuguese government in Brazil should have little confidence in Wellington.[148] This was followed by another letter calling for the removal of Stuart and Forjaz, and censuring Wellington's strategy.[149] This disagreement eventually faded as the time taken to send letters between Portugal and Brazil meant months elapsed waiting for a reply from the Portuguese Government. In the meantime, Wellington's strategy had proved successful, and the differences between the men were deprived of any further significance.

However, Wellington was still conscious of the precarious position he held. He was in command of Britain's only large field force, supported by vast sums of money from the British Government, and politically precarious backing for Portugal and Spain in the war against Napoleon. A single defeat would allow the Whig opposition to the war to gain traction in Britain, which would probably result in the recall of the army and allow Napoleon

144 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.427–32.

145 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.159, 24-26 October.

146 Soriano, *Historia Da Guerra Civil*, Vol.V Parte II, p.145.

147 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.320, Wellington to Charles Stuart, Rio Maior, 6 October 1810.

148 Soriano, *Historia Da Guerra Civil*, Vol.V Parte II, pp.174–77, Offició do conde de Linhares para o embaixador de Portugal em Londres sobre o procedimento dos generaes inglezes, e pouca confiança que mereciam na corte do Rio de Janeiro D Miguel Pereira Forjaz e João Antonio Salicr de Mendonça, 10 February 1811.

149 Soriano, *Historia Da Guerra Civil*, Vol.V Parte II, pp.177–80, Officio do conde de Linhares para o embaixador portuguez em Londres, defendendo o principal Sousa, censurando o plano de lord Wellington e pedindo a remoção de Carlos Stuart e de D. Miguel Pereira Forjaz.

finally to conquer the Iberian Peninsula. The 'cautious system' offered Wellington the best chance of success, and would continue as the allied army pursued the French once they left the position at Santarém. Wellington was never to put the army into a headlong attack; he pursued the French retreat methodically, avoiding frontal attacks where a flanking manoeuvre would work. His goal was to ensure the French army was removed from Portugal at the lowest risk to his army.

Massena mirrored Wellington's caution about engaging in a large battle, writing to Ney on 16 October,

> The enemy is dug in to the teeth. He has three lines of works that successively cover Lisbon. If we took the first line of redoubts, he would retire to the second and we would not have achieved much; only we would have moved away from the resources of the country we are occupying to find ourselves in devastated places … orders are given for the entrenchment of all the positions we occupy, so I think it is not the moment to attack the enemy, a failure would destroy all our hopes and would upset this state of affairs …[150]

Once Massena realised he was not likely to make a speedy breakthrough, the French began to entrench themselves before the lines, giving the impression that they were about to undertake a formal siege.[151] Now the French army had stopped moving, food needed to be found in the immediate vicinity to feed the troops, as the reserves brought with the army would quickly run out. Organised bands of marauders would set out to collect grain and other foodstuffs and bring it back to the army using as many mules as were available.[152] Noël recalled, 'Detachments, at first sent out into the immediate neighbourhood, were forced to go further and further away'.[153] *Général de Division* Lazowski was instructed to repair the mills and ovens around Santarém to produce 30,000 rations per day. Water- and wind-mills were repaired, allowing the grain to be ground into flour, but new ovens needed to be built to fulfil the demand for bread. This took longer than expected because of the shortage of skilled workers and tools for their construction. Furthermore, materials for the ovens were in such short supply that houses had to be demolished to obtain the bricks for their manufacture.[154]

Individual units were active in repairing vital equipment destroyed by the Allied army. Noël and his artillery unit worked on a mill for several days, forging new metal parts and making sails from mattress cloth.[155] Viewing the French activity with disappointment, Wellington complained about the reluctance of the Portuguese Regency Council to adopt the measures desired by him. He was driven to write, 'At this moment the enemy are living

150 SHD, 7C10, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance'; Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.408–9.
151 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.238.
152 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.93.
153 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.105.
154 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.240–41.
155 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.106.

upon grain found close to the lines; and they grind it into flour with the mills in our sight, which the government were repeatedly pressed to order the people to render useless …'.[156]

As houses were demolished, Éblé had troops scour the rubble at Santarém to recover useful materials to be used in the construction of a bridge across the Tagus. He also had the kitchens of the town searched for sufficient coal to fire the forges.[157]

> General Éblé started by having the tools – axes, saws, etc. – made out of the iron obtained from demolished houses. He had trees cut down and used his tools to saw beams, cut planks, forge anchors and grappling hooks, and to plait ropes. Finally … he contrived to produce all that was needed for a bridge that could cross the Tagus.[158]

Éblé had also been charged by Massena to make more gunpowder, but had to report that, 'I am sorry to announce that the country is entirely destitute of the raw materials which go into the composition of the powder. I sent for sulphur; I could have hardly collected a pound; it was the same with saltpetre …'.[159]

Massena wrote to Berthier on 29 October,

> For twelve days I have been before the works of the Anglo-Portuguese Army; it is behind three lines of entrenchments, to which it has been labouring for eighteen months … We have not found a single inhabitant in all the country which the army has travelled … It is absolutely nothing but a desert, in which the Portuguese officers I have with me have been of no use to the army.[160]

Lambert listed the problems facing the French army:

> The campaign of the Portuguese Army; The singularity it presents, by crossing a kingdom without seeing an inhabitant; The painful marches it has had to make in a country intersected by mountains, and deprived of guides who supplement the imperfection of maps ; The total exhaustion of the means of clothing, equipment and transport … the inadequacy of resources …[161]

However, the French army was industrious, and experienced in finding food and forage. In some places this was not difficult. As late as 10 November 1810 a reconnaissance, possibly by Captain Scovell, reported, '… Immense quantities of Indian Corn and Straw is found on

156 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.334, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Pero Negro, 16 October 1810.

157 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.187–88, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au maréchal Masséna, Santarem, 17 October 1810.

158 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.109.

159 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.187–88, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au maréchal Masséna, Santarem, 17 October 1810.

160 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, pp.190–92, Lettre du Marechal Massena, Prince d'Essling, Commandant en Chef de l'armee de Portugal, au Prince Berthier, Major-General, Alenquer, 29 October 1810.

161 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*,Vol.3, p.187, Rapport de l'intendant General Lambert au Prince Berthier, Major-General, sur la situation de l'armee de Portugal, Alenquer, 20 October 1810.

the flat and 5 or 6 Regts of Cavalry might with care winter … The main Road is … difficult between Cartaxo & Santarem in wet weather between Azambuja and Cartaxa a heavy sand – wood is everywhere to be found'.[162]

Given the lengths to which Wellington had gone to impose strict rules on the Portuguese population about destroying their crops and stores it may be surprising that the allied army, as well as the civilians, left behind large stocks of food and other supplies for the French.[163] The reason could only be the speed of the retreat. Cocks wrote, 'General Blunt … asked the Capitao Mors some time ago what time would be necessary to remove all the grain between [Leiria] and the Lines. Their answer was six weeks but they had only a few days' notice when we fell back last month. It is clear vast quantities must have been left to the enemy'.[164]

Noël reported that, '… as soon as a hoard [of food] was found, a train of wagons brought back supplies of corn, wheat and forage … On leaving Sobral … we left behind us a room filled with maize'.[165] As late as 30 October Wellington wrote to Lieutenant General Cotton about intercepting French foraging parties between Obidos and Cadaval, well to the north of the defensive lines, using General Anson's brigade of the 16th Light Dragoons and 1st KGL Hussars. 'I think that Gen. Anson might contrive to intercept these parties … and it is really very desirable that these supplies should be intercepted. Pray desire that an effort should be made. The enemy's force is but very small on that side, and they cannot do you any mischief'.[166]

Vice Admiral Berkeley sent some of his seamen to the island of Liseria in the Tagus to assist with the emplacement of two field guns which would secure the cattle still on the left bank of the Tagus from the French, and allow speedier communication across the river.[167] 'Scorched earth' was not fully implemented, but once the armies had settled into their respective positions either side of the defensive lines around Lisbon, with the harvest gathered, the caches of food discovered, and no supplies reaching them from Spain, the French eventually ran out of sufficient supplies to remain in place. The withdrawal to Santarém in November 1810 was the first indication that the French army could not remain in Portugal without substantial reinforcement and the reopening of the supply routes back to their magazines at Almeida and in Spain. Unfortunately for Massena the other army commanders in Spain were less concerned with his fate than with their own fiefdoms. Promised supplies and reinforcements did not arrive, and eventually he had to accept the inevitable and take his army northwards.

162 TNA, WO 37/10, 'Correspondence, Reports and Maps', Rio Mayor from the Ponte d'Asseca to its junction with the Tagus, Description of Country, Nov 1810.

163 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.208, Proclamation to the people of Portugal, 4 August 1810.

164 Cocks, *Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula*, p.93, 14 November.

165 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.106.

166 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.378–79, Wellington to Lieutenant General Stapleton Cotton, Pero Negro, 31 October 1810.

167 De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', p.417.

10

A Libertação

Retreat from the Lines

The French army had been in front of the Lines around Lisbon since 11 October without making any significant attempt to penetrate the defences after the attack at Sobral. Massena's forces had not been idle though. Foraging had been a constant pastime, as well as repairing and preparing machinery and transport, and working on a bridge to cross the Tagus. Wellington was angry with the ineffective implementation of his orders to remove boats from the lower Tagus which the French had been able to collect. Writing to Lieutenant General Hill, he commented, '… you will have heard that the people of Santarém allowed 40 large boats to fall into the hands of the enemy!!!'[1] As a consequence of this he wrote to Vice Admiral Berkeley warning him that he might need to consider how to deal with armed French boats in the Tagus. Wellington stated, 'I consider the loss of the boats at Santarém to be the greatest misfortune that could happen to us, and it may oblige us to change our position, and take up our second line'.[2] In this letter Wellington railed at length against the apparent incompetence of the Regency council:

> In whichever way the boats may be used, their loss is a serious misfortune; and at all events the whole of the Alentejo lies at the mercy of the enemy!! The government may congratulate themselves upon this notable arrangement. They would not adopt in time any one measure to remove what might be useful or necessary to the enemy; they neglected their peculiar business to occupy themselves with what did not concern them ; and there is not an arrangement of any description which depended upon them, or their officers, which has not failed … the boats are left at Santarém in order to give the enemy an opportunity of acting upon our flank and thus dislodging us![3]

1 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.336, Wellington to Lieutenant General Hill, Enxara de los Cavalleiros, 16 October 1810, '¼ before 1 A.M'.

2 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.334, Wellington to Berkeley, Pero Negro, 16 October 1810.

3 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.334, Wellington to Berkeley, Pero Negro, 16 October 1810.

However, from the reports Éblé was sending to Massena, there were no such boats at Santarém. Despite the possible threat of the French crossing the Tagus and operating in Alentejo, Wellington was not too deeply concerned, stating to Vice Admiral Berkeley, 'If the enemy, now in our front, should cross the Tagus with his whole army, which is hardly practicable, I must only do the same with mine ; and I agree with you in thinking, not only that I shall be before them, but shall have the best position in the country, although not fortified'.[4]

From the time when the French headquarters had been established at Rio Maior, work had been underway to prepare the necessary materials build a bridge across the Tagus at Santarém, and boats were indeed in short supply.[5] Four companies of the 44e Bataillon de Flotille and one of *pontonniers* were soon established in the town for the purpose of boat and bridge building under the command of Eblé.[6] A bridge across the Tagus would enable Massena's army to forage for food in Alentejo, and allow a link up with any supporting armies approaching from the direction of Badajoz. Frustratedly, Éblé reported to Massena that there were only two partially submerged boats, and no anchors, tar, ropes, or planks to form the deck of a bridge.[7] The nearest useful trees were nearly three miles from Santarém, and, with no means of transport to speak of, even if they could be felled it would take a long time to move them to the town. In a later report he complained that constructing 25 to 30 boats would need, amongst other things, 120 carpenters, 80 sawyers ,and 200 men to drive 40 teams of horses. He also asked for officers from the artillery who had experience of these professions to oversee the workers.[8] To assist Éblé in his endeavours, Massena sent him 1,600 infantrymen and 3,000 Francs. He also issued an order to the army which read,

> The commanders of artillery of the corps of army will send tomorrow morning all the iron and wood workers that they have, to go during the day to Santarém . Those of the parcs, nor of the artillery of the divisions are to be excluded.
>
> The commanders of the corps d'armée will also send all the workmen in the regiments, either of iron, as tide-masters, locksmiths, etc., or of wood, as wheelwrights, carpenters and sawyers.
>
> Artillery workers will leave with their tools. All will leave armed with their muskets and will be under the orders of General Eble.[9]

Work continued on the bridge, but slowly, and contradictory orders were issued by some generals which deprived the work of the necessary labour. Montbrun took 200 men of the 76e Ligne from the work at Santarém for an attack on Abrantes, causing work on the bridge to be temporarily suspended, and prompting Éblé to write in strong terms to Massena about

4 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.339, Wellington to Berkeley, Pero Negro, 17 October 1810, 8:00 a.m.
5 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.218.
6 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.237.
7 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.187–89, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au maréchal Masséna, Santarem, 17 October 1810.
8 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.189–90, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au maréchal Masséna, Santarem, 19 October 1810.
9 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.191–92, Ordre, Alenquer, 20 October 1810.

the delays.[10] Montbrun had been ordered by Massena on 24 October to move to Abrantes and take the town, which had a boat bridge across the Tagus. This bridge had been built by British engineers in 1808, and the surrounding area surveyed, '… by Lt Stanley with a plane table …'.[11] Fririon was given the task of checking if there were sufficient forces for the attempt, and if not then Ney was to be sent instead.[12] With forces comprising troops from the 44e Bataillon de Flotille, battalions from 66e and the above-mentioned 76e Ligne and squadrons from the 6e and 11e Dragons, Montbrun advanced as far as Punhete on the Zezere, but failed to make any more progress.[13]

Loison subsequently pushed a reconnaissance as far as Abrantes, but not in sufficient strength to threaten the town. The town was defended by the Portuguese 13° and 22° Infantaria under Governor Lobo, with Wellington's representative being Captain Patton, an engineer who, by Wellington's orders, had a veto on any surrender of the town.[14] Despite the French manoeuvring, there was no real attack on the town, and the road northwards to Castello Branco was effectively blocked to any French movement.

The isolation of the French army was important for the allies' strategy, accordingly any bridge over the Tagus must never come to completion. Wellington was to consider a novel scheme to destroy the bridging equipment collected at Santarém by the use of Congreve rockets. He wrote to Vice Admiral Berkeley to ask for some, as, '… there are none in the stores of the army, and I understand there are some in the fleet under your command …'[15] Berkeley was also to provide an officer and seamen who know how to use them. According to Berkeley, on 24 October he provided the necessary equipment and men, enabling, '… every precautionary step to counteract the Enemy's preparation of Bridges to cross the Tagus, by exploding machines …'[16] There followed a discussion between the two men, via letter, about the attributes of the weapon, with Wellington stating:

> I assure you that I am no partisan of Congreve's rockets, of which I entertain but a bad opinion, from what I recollect of the rockets in the East Indies, of which I believe those of Congreve are an imitation. It is but fair, however, to give every thing a trial, more particularly as I have received the orders of government to try these machines.[17]

The idea was to fire them from Hill's advanced posts, on the left bank of the Tagus, directly at boats near Villa Franca.

10 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.193–94, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au maréchal Masséna, Santarem, 23 October 1810.

11 TNA, MPH 1/152/1, 'Plan of the Position at Abrantes': Shows Fields, Village, Roads; and a Bridge of Boats across the River [Tagus]', 1808.

12 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, pp.91–94.

13 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.251–54; Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.252–53.

14 Jones and Jones, *Journals of Sieges*, Vol.3, p.36.

15 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.381–82, Wellington to Berkeley, Pero Negro, 1 November 1810.

16 De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', p.417.

17 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.399, Wellington to Berkeley, Pero Negro, 6 November 1810.

> General Fane and his Division crossed the Tagus on 2 November with a Captain of the Navy, 200 Marines, and 100 Seamen attached to it, with the Flotilla of Flat Boats with Field Pieces, with 2 exploding machines to destroy the bridge … This very prompt movement afforded one of the Grandest Military Sights ever exhibited, above 300 boats armed, moving and keeping pace with the Army on the Road, ready to transport it, while the Flotilla of Gun Boats were in advance to clear the roads and banks of the Enemy, and a division of country boats with pontoons and every necessary apparatus for constructing Flying Bridges brought up the rear.[18]

The attack, undertaken on the 13 November, failed to score any significant hits on the bridging equipment or matériel, indeed Éblé made no mention of any rocket attack in his reports to Massena. Lieutenant Lindsey of the Royal Navy, commander of the rocket unit, dined with Dickson on 29th November, who recorded, 'From what I can learn he only fired a few of the carcass rockets, and without much apparent effect …'[19] The attack had made one important point to the French: they could not expect to be able to move freely onto the left bank of the Tagus. Hill's corps was there and would prevent them from foraging in the undisturbed Alentejo.

Isolating the French army had been an essential part of Wellington's overall plan. Their communications with Spain had for practical purposes been cut since crossing the Mondego after the Battle of Buçaco. Wellington was able to write to the Earl of Liverpool that the French army, '… possess no part of the country excepting that on which their army stands'.[20] He was to write in December,

> It is certainly astonishing that the enemy have been able to remain in this country so long ; and it is an extraordinary instance of what a French army can do. It is positively a fact that they brought no provisions with them, and they have not received even a letter since they entered Portugal. With all our money, and having in our favor [sic] the good inclinations of the country, I assure you that I could not maintain one division in the district in which they have maintained not less than 60,000 men and 20,000 animals for more than two months.[21]

However, rather than being surprised, Wellington knew this was an indication that his plan for 'scorched earth' had failed between Coimbra and Lisbon.

To counter the isolation of Massena's army, Napoleon instructed *Général de Division* Drouet, '… to cover the communications with the Duke [sic] d'Essling …'.[22] but Drouet, despite these orders, was dilatory in moving any troops to his aid. The isolation of the *Armée de Portugal* was very effective, and although Massena had sent several messages to Paris he was unaware if his dispatches were getting through. A previous attempt to send a messenger had resulted in the hanging of *Capitaine* Mascarenhas, a Portuguese officer in

18 De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', p.417.
19 Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.304.
20 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.367–68, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Pero Negro, 27 October 1810.
21 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.469, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Cartaxo, 21 December 1810.
22 Picard and Tuetey, *UCN3*, Vol.3, p.864, 4784, Napoleon to Marshal Berthier, Fontainebleau, 2 November, 1810.

French service. Mascarenhas had been captured by the *Ordenança* on his way to the frontier along the Mondego valley disguised as a peasant.[23] To ensure his next message got through, Massena resolved to send a strong force and a known, reliable soldier. *Général de Brigade* Foy, wounded at Buçaco, was chosen and on 29 October was sent to report personally to Napoleon regarding the situation of the *Armée de Portugal*. Foy was accompanied by 50 Dragoons of the 3e Régiment Provisoire, 70 Chasseurs Hanovrienne, and the 4/47e Ligne, composed of '… weak conscripts'.[24] Foy made it to Ciudad Rodrigo where he left his escort and plunged on, with a new escort, across Spain to Paris, arriving there on 21 November. Napoleon, somewhat pre-empting Massena's message, had already issued fresh orders to Drouet to collect troops left behind in the rear, along with his IX Corps, and to re-establish communications with Massena.[25] These orders were issued by Berthier on 3 November and must have crossed paths with Foy as he travelled to Paris.

On the same day that Foy left for Paris, Massena went to Santarém to check the reports regarding the progress of the construction of the bridge over the Tagus. Before Massena left for Santarém, he wrote to *Général de Brigade* Fririon, effectively leaving him in command, with the assistance of Pelet, his first ADC, who, '… remains at Alenquer with the order to open all the letters addressed to me: he will communicate to you all those relating to the service …'[26] It is an indication of the uncertainty of Massena's position that he went himself to Santarém to confirm the reports he had been receiving about progress in the town. He clearly did not believe that things in Santarém were as bad as he was being told, and was unhappy with the headway being made. Éblé had written to him three days before, stating,

> … Your Highness … seems unhappy that I do not have anything satisfactory to report … By putting at my disposition all the means which the army can provide, he imagines himself to have given me all that I need; but I beg him to remember that the workers have hardly arrived and that we must begin by having them make tools … no caulker, builder or boatman has arrived, and it is they whose work would be most useful to us.[27]

All the time that Massena's forces were diminishing through skirmishes, sickness and malnutrition, Wellington was receiving reinforcements through Lisbon. He was able to add new formations to the army during the time it was behind the lines, and the sick and wounded from the first part of the campaign were able to return to their units. Conversely, Éblé described to Massena how French soldiers sent to work in Santarém were mutinying, and he was forced to call for *gendarmes* to be sent to arrest them. Lazowski also reported to Massena of the increasing friction between senior officers: 'Each of us does not dare to lose the inadequate means in our power, because each of us remains, in isolation and to the

23 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.406–7, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Pero Negro, 10 November 1810.

24 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, pp.106–7; Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.98.

25 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.21, p.250, 17097, Au Prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de L'armée d'Espagne , a Fontainebleau, 3 November 1810.

26 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.95; Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.262.

27 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, p.197, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au maréchal Masséna, Santarem, 26 October 1810.

detriment of the general service, responsible for the execution of your orders. In this way we paralyze our means, and your orders are not executed, in spite of all the zeal that is brought to them'.[28]

Fririon reported to Massena on 9 November that although Junot had confidence in his troops, his position at Sobral was vulnerable. Furthermore, *Général de Division* Clausel stated that he could not rely on any of his troops but those in the outpost line, as the others were absent looking for food.[29] Even the front line troops were suffering from starvation, and Noël, accompanying Clausel on a tour of inspection around Sobral recalled:

> … we came upon a bivouac that had been established to protect Sobral and support the advanced positions … not a single man, not even a sentinel was on guard … Hunger had driven all of them, officers and men, to go out pillaging although they were only a couple of paces away from the enemy's advanced posts.[30]

With his army beginning to fall apart around him, Massena put in place plans to withdraw to more defensible positions around Santarém, which he also hoped would provide additional supplies to feed his army. Orders were issued on the 10th for the retreat and distributed to the respective corps.[31]

The retreat to Santarém began on the night of 14 November, with VIII Corps leaving its positions around Sobral at around 8pm.[32] A fog which descended which obscured the movement from the eyes of the allied outposts. There was some confusion in the French high command about routes of march and destinations for the different army corps, and Massena issued clarification to Fririon as to where II and VIII Corps particularly were to march and camp.[33] The position at Santarém had been well chosen, with the front being covered by the Rio Maior and the marshy ground along it. By the 18th, the French army had firmly established its position around Santarém with II Corps forming the main line with outposts at Cartaxo, and its left flank protected by the Tagus. VIII Corps was located on the right flank, pulled back between Alcanhede and Pernes. The bulk of VI Corps was in reserve, extending out to Punhete.

Once the withdrawal of the French had been confirmed, Wellington set his forces in motion, but with orders to feel their way forward with care. The caution evident in the pursuit of the retreating French was because Wellington had been informed of enemy reinforcements on the frontier near Almeida.[34] The allied troops carefully probed forward, and in following up the French retreat, Leach reported that,

28 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.204–5, Pièces Justificatives, général Lazowski au maréchal Masséna, Punhete, 15 November 1810.

29 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, pp.106–8, Au Marechal Massena, Alenquer, le 8 novembre, à minuit.

30 Noël, *With Napoleon's Guns*, p.106.

31 SHD, 7C10, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance', Dispositions générals pour un changement de position de l'armée, 10 November 1810; Fririon, *Journal Historique*, pp.109–11.

32 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.112.

33 SHD, 7C10, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance'; Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.819, Le Maréchal Massena, Prince d'Esseling, Duc de Rivoli, au général Fririon, Chef d'Etat Major General, Santarem, 13 November 1810.

34 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.421, Wellington to Craufurd, On the hill in front of Sobral, 15 November 1810, 10:20 a.m.

> The road from Alemquer to Azimbuja was covered with horses, mules, and asses, belonging to the French, which had died from want of forage. We passed many French soldiers lying dead by the road-side, whose appearance indicated that disease and want of food had carried them off. Every house in every town or village which lay in their line of retreat was thoroughly ransacked. Desolation and devastation marked their track.[35]

Tomkinson wrote, 'When at the Ponte de Calares, the men, in an adjacent Quinta, found out some wine, and after drinking nearly to the bottom of one of the large casks, holding three or four pipes of wine, they looked into it and saw a dead peasant, who had been put in by the French'.[36] This story might be apocryphal, as Schaumann relates a similar one, but with a fully equipped French soldier in the wine vat. However, the true gruesome nature of the French occupation was recorded first-hand by him. He wrote, 'I had established a small stores depot in Rio Mayor [sic] … The French had deserted everything here. In the houses, which had to be cleansed by our men before they could be used, dead bodies of French soldiers and animals were found in a state of decomposition. All domestic utensils had been destroyed, and the graves opened'.[37]

Wellington wrote to his brother on 21 November and reported, 'The French have a position at Santarém, compared with which Busaco [sic] is nothing. However, when it shall be fair weather, and the roads passable, I hope to dislodge them by moving on their flanks'.[38] Wellington was not to be hurried, and had all the advantages of secure communications and almost unlimited supplies. He could take his time and allow starvation to reduce the French army to a condition where it could no longer hold its new position.

Massena had no choice but to seek a different river crossing in the hopes of re-establishing communications, and so he ordered Éblé to move the bridging equipment from the Tagus and construct a bridge over the Zezere. Éblé organised the movement of what had been constructed at Santarém upstream, being limited in the speed of his endeavour by the small number of wagons available.[39] To add to the delays, the Zezere was in flood because of the winter rains, and Lazowski reported that boats were being washed away when the engineers tried to construct a bridge. However, Éblé reported that, from midday on 17 November the first bridge was passable by foot traffic, but there was still work to do to make it safe for wagons.[40] Massena wrote to Berthier in December stating bluntly that, 'My position is difficult, but, I repeat, to attack three lines of entrenchments and an enemy who has twice as much strength as me, and behind all means necessary to re-embark, did not seem suitable to me for the good of the service of His Majesty'.[41] Massena informed Berthier that he

35 Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier*, p.179.

36 Tomkinson, *Diary*, p.63.

37 Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington*, p.274.

38 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.425, Wellington to Henry Wellesley, Cartaxo, 21 November 1810.

39 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.203–4, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au maréchal Masséna, Santarem, 7 November 1810.

40 Girod de l'Ain, *Le Général Eblé*, pp.206–7, Pièces Justificatives, général Eblé au maréchal Masséna, Santarem, 18 November 1810.

41 SHD, 7C10, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance', Le Marechal Massena a le Prince de Wagram, December 1810; Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.819.

had moved to the defensive and would await Napoleon's orders. At about the same time, Wellington reported that the intelligence he was gathering told of the privations suffered by the French, as well as the failed attempt to build a bridge across the Tagus.[42] This type of intelligence gave Wellington a view into the situation of Massena's army, and informed him about the likely moves he would make.

Hill's corps was moved across the Tagus on the 17th November following reports from Major General Fane that the French were building another bridge on the Zezere. Boats from the Royal Navy, under the supervision of Rear Admiral Williams, were used to ferry the troops across at Valada.[43] This placed Hill's corps in a position where it could move to Abrantes if that town came under attack, or interfere with the French retreat if it were to go towards Castello Branco. Hill was also able to send patrols along the left bank to interrupt any attempts at foraging by the enemy, and observe the progress the French were making in their attempts to build any new bridges. Hill's troops, with the assistance of naval shore-parties keeping a lookout along the Tagus, captured some French foraging boats which were intercepted opposite Santarém.[44] By 1 December Hill's corps on the left bank comprised the 2nd Division, the Portuguese Division under Major General Hamilton, the 13th Light Dragoons and two brigades of Portuguese cavalry, and a battery of Portuguese artillery.[45]

On 26 December, a reconnaissance party sent out by Massena made contact with Drouet's forces at Espinhal. Massena had expected the whole of Drouet's IX Corps, but instead the only forces which eventually made it down to Massena consisted of *Général de Division* Conroux's Division of IX Corps of about 6,000 men. *Général de Division* Claparede's Division of IX Corps was still in the region of Celorico fighting against the militia there. To make matters worse, Drouet informed Massena that he was not directly under Massena's orders.[46] Napoleon's remote direction of the war in Spain was now to have unpleasant consequences for Massena. Drouet wrote to Ney on 30 December that he was not to be united with the *Armée de Portugal*, '… my orders are clear and precise in this regard'.[47] Grateful for any assistance, Massena invited Drouet to occupy Leiria, which he agreed to, however the friction between Massena and Drouet over ultimate command was to continue to cause problems during the forthcoming retreat.

Despite the manoeuvrings around Santarém, the two armies sat opposite one another without a large-scale action, with Wellington able to report that there was no change or offensive activity by the French from their new position.[48] Wellington's troops remained in their quarters until the early spring of 1811. There was occasional skirmishing between picquets, but on the whole both sides left the other alone. Some sentries were only yards away from their enemy, even exchanging food, tobacco and drink with each other, or engaging in

42 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.367–68, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Pero Negro, 27 October 1810.

43 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.425–27, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Cartaxo, 21 November 1810; De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', p.418.

44 De Toy, 'Admiral George Berkeley and Peninsular Victory, 1809-1812', p.418.

45 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.41, Distribution of the allied army on 1 December 1810.

46 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.321; Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.284–87; Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs', p.460.

47 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.435–36.

48 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.646, See for example, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Cartaxo, 2 March 1811.

games.[49] Messages would be sent between the lines for those who had been captured, or to arrange the exchange of prisoners.

Badajoz

As the situation around Santarém settled into the New Year, and the threat to the capital diminished, Wellington began to receive alarming reports regarding the concentration of Soult's army, and a developing threat to the Portuguese frontier around Badajoz.[50] This was the southern invasion route into Portugal, and had been on Wellington's mind as a serious threat to his plans. He was aware of the danger that a pincer movement could have isolated him from Lisbon in the early stages of the campaign. French troops moving into the Alentejo before his retreat from Buçaco could have crossed the Tagus and caught the Allied army before it reached the Lines at Lisbon. Now, however, with the news of reinforcements reaching Massena, and the approach of Soult and Mortier from the east, Wellington's position began to look threatened. If Massena retreated, as looked likely, Wellington's right flank would be exposed as he pursued any movement Massena made. To counter the threat, Romana's Spanish army had been posted on the frontier of Extremadura and Alentejo, with its headquarters at Badajoz, where Hill's corps in Alentejo could cooperate with it.[51] Mortier's V Corps had kept Wellington's eye on the area with repeated forays against Romana's forces, threatening to move into Portugal.[52] When the allied army retreated to the Lines of Torres Vedras, Romana moved to join Wellington with a portion of his army, leaving Mendizabal in command of the forces left on the frontier.[53] Mendizabal was ordered, if he was threatened by the French, to retire across the Guadiana and destroy the bridges at Merida and Medellin, preventing the French from crossing.[54] Despite these orders, once the French advance began Mendizabal withdrew without destroying the bridges. Wellington had hoped for some delay, but, '… I have been disappointed in that expectation, and the town and bridge of Merida appear to have been given up to an advanced guard of [enemy] cavalry …'.[55] Mendizabal's lack of effort was frustrating, with Wellington writing exasperatedly,

> They have had the whole province of Estremadura open to them since the beginning of July ; and it was particularly settled between the Marques de la Romana and me, not only that the abundant harvest of Estremadura should supply his garrisons, but that a large magazine should be formed for this army!!! To form these magazines, however, required arrangement, foresight, and activity; and there our allies invariably fail us. If it be true that there are no provisions in Badajoz, the French will undoubtedly get that place, if they only approach it; and then there will be a

49 Costello, *The Adventures of a Soldier; or, Memoirs of Edward Costello*, p.83.
50 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.515–17, Wellington to Beresford, Cartaxo, 12 January 1810.
51 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.152, Wellington to Hill, Alverca, 5 July 1810.
52 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.240, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Alverca, 22 August 1810.
53 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.348, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Pero Negro, 20 October 1810.
54 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.495, Wellington to Beresford, Cartaxo, 2 January 1811.
55 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.519, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Cartaxo, 12 January 1811.

> fine breeze! Mendizabal, &c., have sent us so many false reports, that I cannot make out what the French are doing.[56]

On the French side, things were almost as fraught. Napoleon had sent Soult a message in October criticising him for not pursuing Romana's forces when they moved to unite with Wellington near Lisbon. Explaining to the Emperor why he had not followed Romana, Soult wrote that he would advance to take Badajoz, which would relieve some of the pressure from Massena by diverting Wellington's attention. The lack of resources in an already desolate country would make any more exertions by his army impossible.[57] Once he had collected the necessary troops for his operation, Soult pushed forward to Olivença, one of the defended towns on the Spanish/Portuguese border, south of Badajoz, and laid siege to it. Soult was besieging Olivença when he received more letters from Paris urging him to action. He received a stinging letter from Napoleon, via Berthier, written in November, expressing the Imperial displeasure at the lack of vigorous military activity.[58] This was followed by a brief but urgent letter from Napoleon exhorting Soult to advance on the Tagus and give support to Massena.[59] Marshal Soult left Olivença on the 26th, with Marshal Mortier, commander of V Corps, to lay siege to Badajoz.[60] Soult was clear that a straightforward advance on the Tagus was out of the question, as there were six fortresses, Badajoz, Olivença, Jurumenha, Elvas, Campo-Maior and Albuquerque, and 20,000 enemy, which would be able to cut his forces off from Spain. He would advance in a methodical fashion, reducing the fortresses as he went, and would then be in a position to establish communications with Massena.[61] Mortier's and Soult's forces established a cordon around the town of Badajoz, and trenches were begun on the night of the 28-29 January 1811.[62]

Wellington received more bad news on 23January, that the Marquis de la Romana had died from 'spasms in his chest'. Romana was, in the eyes of Wellington, a rare commodity: a reliable Spanish general. He wrote, 'Under existing circumstances, his loss is the greatest which the cause could sustain; and I don't know how we are to replace him'.[63] Mendizabal was given temporary command of the Spanish army in Estremadura until another could be appointed. Wellington wrote to him somewhat pointedly,

> I have lost a colleague, a friend, and an adviser, with whom I had lived on the happiest terms, of friendship, intimacy, and confidence ; and I shall revere and regret his memory to the last moment of my existence … Although we are both placed in an arduous situation, I have no doubt that, by prudent management and

56 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.537–38, Wellington to H. Wellesley, Cartaxo, 20 January 1811.

57 Jacques Vital Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges Faits Ou Soutenus Par Les Français Dans La Peninsule, de 1807 à 1814* (Paris: Didot, 1837), Vol.I, pp.460–63, Soult to Berthier, Seville, 1 December 1810.

58 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.21, p.273, 17131, Napoleon au Berthier, Fontainebleau, 14 November 1810.

59 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.21, pp.367–68, 17295, Napoleon au Berthier, Paris, 25 January 1811.

60 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.663.

61 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.1, p.472, Soult au Berthier, Olivença, 22 January 1810.

62 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.669.

63 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.543–44, Wellington to Charles Stuart, Cartaxo, 23 January 1811.

> by a cordial union of views and actions, we shall extricate ourselves from all our difficulties; and you may depend upon my disposition to communicate with you with the same frankness and sincerity as I did with your respectable predecessor, and to give you such assistance as the means in my power will enable me to afford.[64]

There was an unusual lack of composure in a letter from Wellington to Beresford the next day. He wrote,

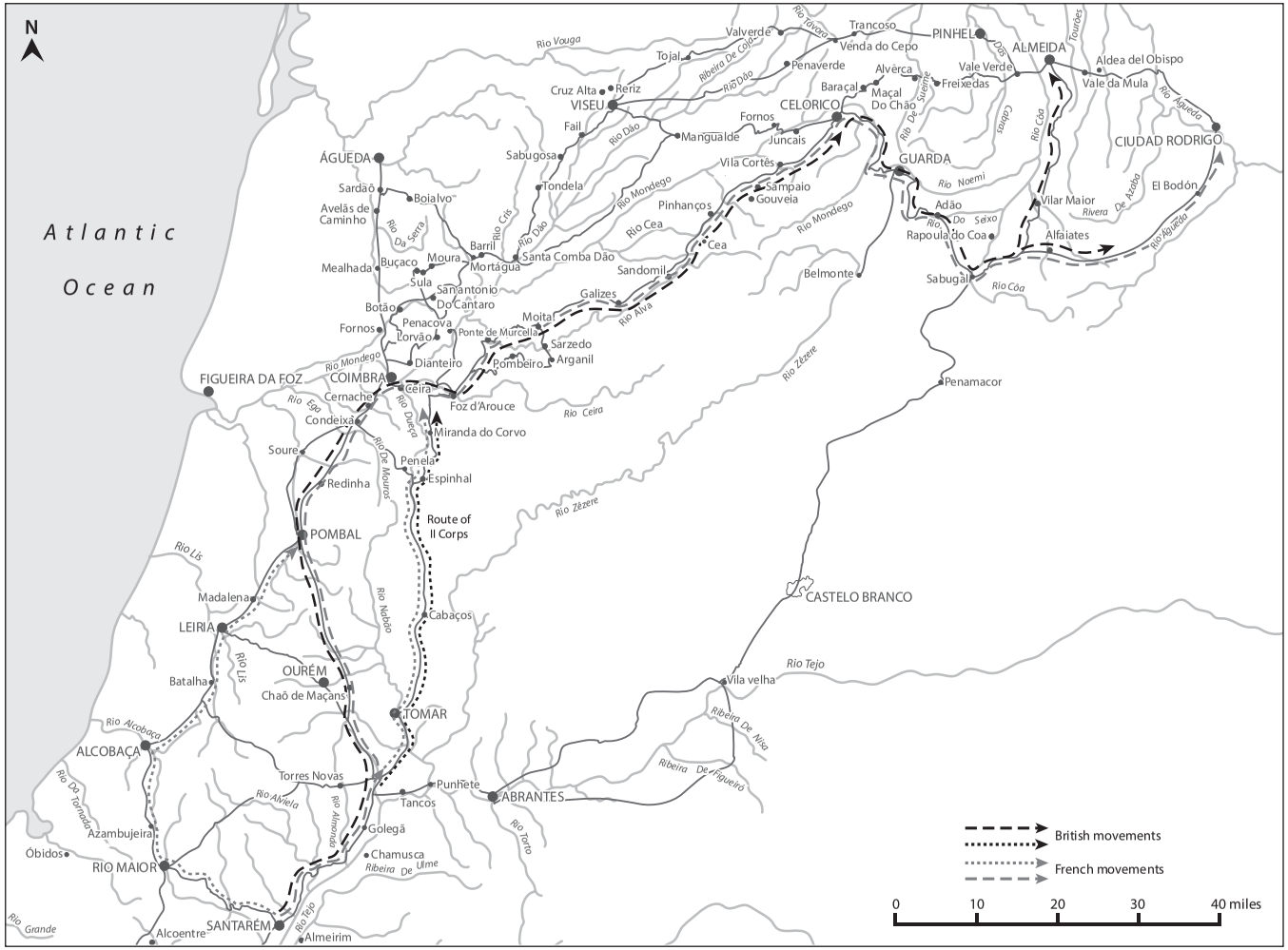
> … I declare that, notwithstanding all my practice, I have not health or spirits to go through all the difficulties of carrying on the service, crossed and thwarted as it is by the wants of the Portuguese and Spanish armies ; the obstinacy with which they persevere in opposing and rendering fruitless all measures to set them right or save them ; and the difficulties thrown in the way by our own government and officers'.[65]

Regaining his self-control somewhat, in a letter to Marshal Beresford on the 15th February, Wellington expressed a level of uncertainty regarding both Soult's and Massena's behaviour:

> I don't know what to say to Massena's remaining. The difficulty of remaining without supplies increases daily, as well as the expediency, or indeed almost necessity, that he should remain in order to support Soult's operations. If he should be obliged to go, he ought to detach to Soult a large force, otherwise Soult is gone. At present we can do nothing.[66]

The siege of Badajoz progressed slowly, and by 8 March Soult had learned of Massena's retreat to the north, and the probability now existed that Wellington would move troops down to interrupt the siege.[67] Wellington had informed the governor of Badajoz on 6 March that assistance was on its way, and that the fortress must be held at all costs. Forces were detached from the main field army on the 9th, marching south from Thomar.[68] Wellington felt that Badajoz should be able to maintain a defence until these troops were able to reach it and raise the siege. However, an event occurred which presented Soult with the fortress without the need to storm it. *Mariscal de Campo* Rafael Menacho, the original commander, had been killed on 3 March and *General de Brigada* José Imaz had succeeded to the command. Threatened with an assault, and disappointingly for Wellington, reinforcing his already poor view of the capability of the Spanish armies, Imaz surrendered the fortress on 10 March, the news reaching Wellington by the 14th. Wellington was at a loss over the surrender of Badajoz. In a letter to his brother, he complains that Imaz, '… does not complain of the situation of the place on the 8th: on the 9th he acknowledged the receipt of my message to him: and on the 10th he capitulated!'[69] Wellington was scathingly critical of

64 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.548–49, Wellington to General Mendizabal, Cartaxo, 24 January 1811.
65 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.548, Wellington to Beresford, Cartaxo, 24 January 1811.
66 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.599, Wellington to Beresford, Cartaxo, 15 February 1810.
67 Belmas, *Journaux Des Siéges*, Vol.3, p.714.
68 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.669, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Villa Seca, 14 March 1811.
69 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.685, Wellington to the Rt. Hon. H. Wellesley, Arganil, 20th March, 1811.



Map 11 French withdrawal and Allied pursuit from Santarém to Almeida.

Imaz's efforts: there was even suspicion in the Allied camp that Imaz was paid to surrender the fortress.[70] Although the threat to Lisbon from Massena had been removed, there now existed the possibility of a thrust from Soult into Alentejo, but Soult was not to progress further than Badajoz.

Retreat from Santarém

Foy returned to the *Armée de Portugal* on 5 February carrying new instructions for Massena. Napoleon exhorted him to stay at Santarém for as long as possible, but in the event that food was short, he could retire on the Mondego.[71] Massena took the opportunity offered by this, and following a meeting over lunch with his senior commanders, where the options were discussed, the decision was taken to retreat northwards and re-establish communications with Almeida. Orders were issued on 1 March for the retreat, which was to begin on the night of 5-6 March. Massena wrote a long explanatory letter to Berthier, complaining of the lack of support from Mortier's V Corps and Soult's army in Andalusia, and sent Foy back to Paris to tell Berthier and Napoleon of his decision. By retiring to the Mondego, Massena believed he could sustain the army for up to 60 days whilst new lines of communication were established to Spain. VI Corps, reinforced during the forthcoming retreat by Conroux's Division of IX Corps and the cavalry of the army, was to form the rearguard while II Corps marched to Espinhal, and VIII Corps moved to Pombal.[72] On 6 February Napoleon had issued an order placing Drouet directly under Massena's command, but it was now far too late as the order would take too long to reach Massena's headquarters.[73]

The order of march for French army shows that the intention was to concentrate VI Corps at Leiria, and send II Corps via Thomar to Espinhal.[74] VIII Corps was to head for Pombal via Chaõ de Maçans. Once VIII Corps had passed, VI Corps was to take up its position as the rearguard. VI Corps was ordered to Pombal marching via Casal des Ovos on 7 March, and taking up position there on the 9th.[75] The wooden bridge at Punhete over the Zezere was finally destroyed on the night of 7-8 March, and the last troops, the Légion du Midi, crossed in barges which were then burned.[76]

Massena's objective was to cross the Mondego at Coimbra, and consequently he sent a reconnaissance in force under Montbrun, consisting of the 15e and 25e Dragons with *Colonel* Valazé and his engineers, to assess the state of the bridge there. The plan was to occupy both banks of the Mondego for as long as possible.[77] The French had advanced in October 1810 from Coimbra along the route they were now to retreat by. During their advance Pelet had

70 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.674, Wellington to Marquis Wellesley, Louzão, 16 March, 1811.
71 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, pp.121–22.
72 SHD, 7C12, 'Armée de Portugal: Correspondance', 1810, Le Marechal Massena, Prince d'Essling, a S. A. le Prince de Wagram et de Neufchatel, Torres Novas, 6 March, 1811.
73 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.21, p.387, 17335, Au Prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de L'armée d'Espagne , a Paris, 6 February 1811.
74 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.479.
75 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.482–84.
76 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.425; Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.341.
77 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.434.

noted some useful position upon which a rearguard might take up a defence, and presumably these had been noted either in his Journal or on his maps.[78]

Wellington had been developing a plan to outflank the enemy position at Santarém, but this was foiled by Massena's retreat. Towards the end of February Wellington was developing the plan for an attack, but there is only an oblique reference to trying, '… something else of greater extent, but more doubtful result'.[79] The full plan was commented on by D'Urban who wrote on 23 February that Beresford told him of Wellington's plan to attack the French in a pincer movement by the Rio Mayor on the left, and the right at Abrantes.[80] Wellington wrote on 5 March of his intention, now that the reinforcement had arrived, in a few days, '… to attack the enemy if he retains this position, or possibly to attack him in any other which he may take …'.[81] but by then the enemy was in the final stages of preparing the retreat.

When he visited his forward positions on 4 March Wellington noted a change in the French defences, and the French retreat was confirmed to Beresford in a letter sent at 5:00 a.m. on 6 March.[82] The French employed straw dummies dressed in uniform and placed as sentinels to confuse the Allied outposts, which gained them a few hours march on their pursuers.[83] Orders to follow the French were issued between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., and troops were sent out to locate and identify the route they were taking.[84] By the 9th, Wellington had the bulk of his forces pursuing VI and VIII Corps along the road to Pombal and Coimbra. II Corps, on the road to Espinhal, were followed by a single brigade of infantry and a squadron of cavalry under Major General Nightingall, who had orders not to proceed beyond Espinhal.[85]

The allies pursued the French army northwards, and Ney was ordered to delay the allied advance at Pombal on the 11th. The intention was to allow the advanced guard of the French army, under Montbrun, time to attempt to make a secure crossing of the Mondego at Coimbra, where the town was held by Trant and his militia. The failure to provide Massena with overall authority, and the divisive structure of command in the Peninsular now caused problems for Ney. Drouet refused to allow Conroux's division to be used by Ney, and despite pleas from Massena he withdrew towards Ponte de Murcella. This put Ney in a difficult position: he had been ordered to hold the allies at Pombal, but now felt he had insufficient forces to do so. Accordingly, he withdrew the majority of his forces to Venda da Cruz and Redinha, leaving a small force consisting of two battalions of the 6e Légère, one artillery piece and a small unit of the 6e Dragons in Pombal.[86]

On 10 March had Wellington written,

> The enemy still continue on their ground in front of Pombal, but not, I think, in the strength in which they were yesterday. They are still, however, very strong ; and my

78 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.214.
79 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.619, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Cartaxo, 23 February 1811.
80 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.185, 23 February.
81 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.651, Wellington to Beresford, Cartaxo, 5 March 1811, 6:00 a.m.
82 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.655, Wellington to Beresford, Cartaxo, 6 March 1811, 5:00 a.m.
83 Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Souvenirs Militaires*, p.118.
84 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.655, Wellington to Beresford, Santarem, 6 March 1811, 4:0 p.m..
85 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.43, G. Murray, QMG, Perucha, 9 March 1811.
86 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.484–87.

> own opinion is, that they will draw off the corps which they have there in the course of this night. If they do not, I propose to attack them there to-morrow. I think it most likely that they will go back as far as Condeixa, where they will collect their force with more ease than they can at Pombal.[87]

Comprehensive instructions were issued for the attack on Pombal for the afternoon of the 11 March. The Light Division, now commanded by Major General Erskine (Craufurd had returned to England), was to attack the left of the main enemy position, and Picton's 3rd Division was to outflank the village further to the left. The 4th Division was to attack, '… that part of the Enemy's Position which extends along the Coimbra road …'.[88] Cavalry was to be sent out in front of the attack columns to identify, '… and point out the best fords, in addition to the information which has been already furnished by the people of the country'.[89] Defending the town, Guingret recalled, 'The 6eme Légère, of which I was a part, formed the extreme rearguard: the enemy pushed us vigorously … I remember that a [shrapnel] shell removed a whole section of my company'.[90] The British 1/95th and Portuguese 3° Caçadores attacked and drove the French back.[91] As the 6e Légère were retreating from Pombal, Ney rode up and called for them to rally and drive the enemy from the village, which they did. Supported by the 69e Ligne, the French re-occupied Pombal and forced the Allied troops out. During the evening and night the French set fire to the town and retreated towards Redinha.

On the 12th, VI Corps took up a position either side of the Redinha river, covering the bridge through the town from the high ground. The single bridge across the river was at the end of a defile, and Massena had told Ney this position was important to hold whilst the retreat of the rest of the army continued.[92] Mermet's division was placed facing the allied advance along with 14 guns and cavalry from the 3e Hussards and 6e and 11e Dragons, with Marchand's division on the opposite bank covering the bridge and the withdrawal. Wellington advanced his army in three separate columns, with Picton's 3rd Division to the right and the Light Division on the left. Ney noted that the enemy progress was slow and methodical, and skilfully withdrew his troops in the face of the allied advance, and once the artillery had retreated through Redinha, the town was put to the torch. Wellington observed the allied skirmishers crossing the bridge with the enemy, and Simmons recalls that the final retreat of the French over the bridge was followed so closely by the allied light troops, '… the bridge was completely blocked up, numbers fell over its battlements, and others were bayoneted [sic]; in fact, we entered pell-mell with them'.[93] At this combat the

87 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.661, Wellington to Lieutenant General Spencer, Perucha, 10 March 1810.

88 TNA, WO 37/11/24, 'Arrangements for the Attack on the Enemy near Pombal', 11 March 1811; Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.43–44, 'Arrangements for the attack of the enemy's position beyond Pombal, on the afternoon of the 11th of March'.

89 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.43–44, 'Arrangements for the attack of the enemy's position beyond Pombal, on the afternoon of the 11th of March'.

90 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, p.139.

91 Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, pp.139–40.

92 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, p.487.

93 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.667, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Villa Secca, 14 March 1811; Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, pp.140–41.

50e and 59e received acclaim from Ney: '… it is impossible to fight with more vigour and to manoeuver with greater composure and precision before the enemy'.[94] The Allied army pursued the French until nightfall when a halt was called.

At Coimbra *Général de Division* Montbrun, after delaying on the left bank of the Mondego, had been unable to gain the bridge in the face of Trant's small militia forces, obliging Massena to order the army to march eastwards to Ponte de Murcella to secure and repair the bridge across the Alva. Unless he could cross the Alva in time his army would be caught between two rivers and the allied army. Meanwhile, to support this change of plan, Ney received more orders from Massena on the evening of the 12th that he should try to hold the enemy at Condeixa, which would allow the baggage time to retreat through Miranda de Corvo. Wellington kept up the pursuit the next day, following the French to their position above the ravine in front of Condeixa. Ney took up a position near Condeixa, but Wellington moved Picton's division on the French left that would cut off their retreat, and so Ney withdrew before any action started.[95]

Following up the French retreat from Condeixa, there was an action at Casal Novo on 14 March. Major General Erskine was ordered to follow the enemy along the road to Miranda do Corvo,[96] and marched accordingly with the Light Division and attached cavalry. The advanced picquets of the 43rd and 52nd reported that the enemy was in position around the village, but Erskine ordered the division to advance.[97] As the Light Division advanced, the heavy fog that had been present that morning began to lift, and the French saw the division in close column of march along the road. The French opened fire with their artillery, which caused many casualties among the allied troops. Skirmishers were sent forward, and Rifleman Costello remembered, 'The enemy still continued the retreat, their skirmishers, at times, making short stands to keep our rifles in check, and a few of their rear sections occasionally pouring a running fire into us. We drove them, however, through the village of Casal Nova [sic]'.[98] By employing the 3rd Division to turn the enemy's left flank, the French were pushed out of successive positions back towards Miranda do Corvo. Nightingall was ordered to continue his pursuit of II Corps from Espinhal to Miranda do Corvo, to be assisted by Colonel Hawker's brigade of cavalry. Cole's 4th Division was ordered to Penela, and to establish communications with Nightingall.[99] In addition, Pack's Portuguese Brigade was to move towards Miranda do Corvo. This, with the advance of Nightingall, might trap the French rearguard, and if not, then it would occupy Espinhal and take the bridge at Miranda do Corvo, opening the route to Foz d'Arouce and positioning a strong force to pursue II Corps further north. Major General Hoghton received orders to take his brigade away from the pursuit of Massena and go southwards to reinforce Hill's corps, positioned around Chamusca and Almerim, and advance on Badajoz.[100] The majority of Wellington's

94 Girod de l'Ain, *Vie Militaire Du Général Foy*, pp.488–92, Rapport au Marechal Massena, prince d'Essling, Refança, 12 March 1811.

95 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.661–70, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Villa Secca, 14 March, 1811.

96 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.48, Arrangement for the movement of the army on the 14th of March, Head-Quarters, Ega, 13 March, 1811.

97 Napier, *Passages*, p.180.

98 Costello, *The Adventures of a Soldier; or, Memoirs of Edward Costello*, p.101.

99 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.50, G. Murray, QMG, Villa Seca, 14 March, 1811.

100 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.49.

army continued its pursuit of the *Armée de Portugal*, which was now clearly heading away from Coimbra, eastwards along of the left bank of the Mondego.

The French rearguard again stood to face the allied forces at Foz d'Arouce on 15 March, in order to hold the bridge over the Ceira. Ney had left the larger portion of his corps on the left bank of the Ceira, and with that river in flood the only route for their retreat would be via a single stone bridge. Wellington was clear in his orders for the battle that, 'It is not intended to attempt any thing against the enemy's position beyond the Ceira, but only to drive the troops on the left bank across the river'.[101] Leach recalled, 'The day was drawing to a close, and the troops were cooking their suppers, when a sudden order reached the bivouac for them to fall in, and to attack the French rear-guard'.[102] As soon as the allied attack developed, Ney issued orders to move the remaining troops from the left to the right bank of the Ceira, across the single bridge. VIII Corps was deployed on the right bank of the river, and seeing troops approaching mistook them for the Allies, and opened fire. The 6e Légère and 69e Ligne remained calm, providing cover for the retreating forces.[103] According to Ney's report, the 50e and 59e Ligne were withdrawing in good order over the bridge, but panicked when an artillery battery seemed as if it was going to block their retreat. Soldiers rushed for the bridge, and others plunged into the river in an attempt to swim across. The 50e and 59e Ligne were veteran units, described by Pelet in May 1810 as being, '… magnificent, truly elite units … most of them had taken part in the campaigns of 1805 and 1806 …'.[104] For units such as this to break in battle demonstrated how brittle the morale and effectiveness of some of the French troops had become during the retreat.

Ney described how the allied attack was stopped by the French defence, the allies pulling back at 6:00 p.m., and at 3:00 a.m. the next morning he had the bridge blown.[105] However, the number of dead as a result of the destruction of the bridge indicates it might have been blown earlier, even as French troops were still trying to cross. On 17 March Schaumann recorded the consequences of the destruction of the bridge:

> Here we began to see evidences of the appalling consequences of too hasty a flight. Prisoners assured us that the crowd on the bridge was so thick at the time it was blown up that a number of men had been flung into the air, and about 500 had been drowned in crossing the river. The banks were still covered by dead bodies.[106]

The following day he wrote, 'Murdered peasants lay in all directions … I halted at a door to beg water from a man … He proved to be dead … The inside of the house was ghastly to behold. All its inmates lay murdered in their beds …'.[107]

101 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.670, Extracts from the instructions communicated by the Q.M.G., Arrangement for the attack of the enemy's rear guard, at Foz d'Arouce, 15 March, 1811.
102 Leach, *Rough Sketches of the Life of an Old Soldier*, p.201.
103 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, p.155.
104 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.22.
105 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.506–7, Rapport au prince d'Essling, 16 March 1811.
106 Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington*, pp.289–90.
107 Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington*, p.290.

The French were without supplies during the retreat, and had to live on what they could forage along their route of march. While not as serious as the French situation, Wellington was suffering his own problems of supply. D'Urban wrote, 'The Army rested and (waited) for the arrival of Biscuit which from the nature of things had been a little behind'.[108] Despite repeated attempts to make the Portuguese government reorganise their commissary, even at this late stage of the campaign their troops were ill fed and provisioned. In a more forthright manner, Wellington wrote to the Earl of Liverpool,

> The destruction of the bridge at Foz d'Arouce, the fatigue which the troops have undergone for several days, and the want of supplies, have induced me to halt the army this day … the Portuguese troops had no provisions, nor any means of conveying any to them … it is literally true, that Gen. Pack's brigade, and Col. Ashworth's, had nothing to eat for 4 days, although constantly marching or engaged with the enemy. I was obliged either to direct the British Commissary Gen. to supply the Portuguese troops, or to see them perish for want ; and the consequence is, that the supplies intended for the British troops are exhausted, and we must halt till more come up, which I hope will be this day.[109]

Ney withdrew VI Corps cautiously, gaining time for the destroyed bridge at Ponte de Murcella to be repaired. VIII Corps retreated over the repaired bridge and took up position behind the river, which offered a fine defensive line, with II Corps crossing the Alva via the fords between Arganil and Sarzedo.[110] The allies continued to follow the French, catching up with them at the Alva, where Simmons noted,

> … the enemy in position on very strong ground at Ponte de Murcella with some guns in position commanding the approach to the river. We formed opposite the enemy and had a fine view of a large body of them. Some nine pounders were soon got up, and commenced pounding their columns. I never saw *Johnny* go off in such confusion.[111]

The Light and 6th Divisions, along with cavalry and two Portuguese brigades, pursued Ney's rearguard over the Alva at Ponte de Murcella on the 18th March, as the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Divisions crossed the Alva further upstream at the ford near Pombeiro.[112] The aim was to cut the VI Corps off from the rest of the French army assembling on the Serra de Moita, but Ney destroyed the bridge and withdrew his forces before the movement could trap him. The allied engineers laid a wooden bridge over the river, and the pursuit continued.[113] Again, supplies were a problem for Wellington, causing pauses in his pursuit of the French. He wrote on 25 March,

108 d'Urban, *Journal*, p.194, 15 March.
109 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.676, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Louzão, 16 March 1811.
110 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.391.
111 Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p.147.
112 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.54.
113 Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington*, p.291; Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p.148.

> The French have gone towards the Coa. Their left will cross at Sabugal, I should think, and their right about Pinhel and Almeida. We have been a little distressed for provisions, which has prevented us from pressing them so hard for these last days as I should have wished.[114]

Two days later he wrote that the army must halt, '… till the supplies which had been sent round from the Tagus to the Mondego should arrive'.[115] Ensign Cowell-Stepney of the Guards commented, 'Neither Indian corn, bread, nor biscuit, was to be seen; and I remember giving a dollar for a ship's biscuit to a sergeant of the 42nd, who was coming up from the rear …'.[116] The Portuguese troops were in a precarious situation as well, still having no food at all from their own commissariat.[117] The French army now marched quickly along the road to Celorico, leaving the allied army behind. Wellington wrote, 'The enemy retired from the position of Moita in the night of the 18th, and have continued their retreat with the utmost rapidity ever since: I imagine their rear guard will be at Celorico this day'.[118] Abandoned caissons and wagons littered the road, and foraging parties which had been left behind were captured.

The situation now was such that Portugal was no longer threatened as it had been only three months before, and Wellington could feel confident that he would not need to embark the army. Consequently, Vice Admiral Berkeley was instructed to send home the bulk of the transports from Lisbon on 20 March 1811, keeping only the, '… ships of war fitted for the conveyance of troops [and] coppered transports for the conveyance of 3000 infantry [and] 300 horses, all the hospital ships, and the baggage ships …'.[119]

Massena issued orders on 22 March which surprised both his army and, eventually, Wellington. He instructed his commanders that, after a few days' rest, the army was to move south from around Celorico and Guarda and to make for Belmonte and Alfayates. All information regarding the bridges at Alcantara, Almaraz, and Alconetar was to be collected, as well as intelligence regarding the area around Badajoz, Plasencia, and Coria.[120] Dismayed at the turn of events, Ney sent several letters in response to Massena's order, beginning with a reasonable reply based on the condition of the army and a desire to know if the Emperor had sent new orders. The exchange escalated until Ney refused to obey the direct order from Massena and was relieved of his command. Massena wrote, 'Monsieur le Maréchal, it is with regret that I see you persist in formally disobeying my orders. As Commander-in-chief of the Army of Portugal, no one has the right to require me to inform him of the instructions which I may have received from His Majesty the Emperor'.[121]

Loison was put in command of VI Corps, and Ney was sent to Spain, eventually to return to France. This caused upset in the VI Corps, and the army more generally. Sprünglin wrote,

114 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.695, Wellington to Beresford, Santa Marinha, 25 March, 1811.
115 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.706, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Gouvea, 27 March 1811.
116 Lieut. Col. Sir John Cowell Stepney, *Leaves from the Diary of an Officer of the Guards* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1854), p.65.
117 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.705, Wellington to Stuart, Gouvea, 27 March 1811.
118 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.688, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Oliveira do Hospital, 21 March 1811.
119 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.684, Wellington to Vice Admiral Berkeley, Arganil, 20 March 1811.
120 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.402.
121 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, pp.533–34, Massena to Ney, 22 March 1811, 10:30 p.m.

'… the French army was appalled. The VI corps especially, formed by the Marshal, in 1804, at the Montreuil camp, led by him since that time and of which he knew every soldier, was deeply dejected'.[122] Regardless, Massena pushed his army southwards towards Guarda, and then on to Belmonte, with piquets out to observe the *Estrada Nova* and routes towards Castello Branco. This proved too much for the army, as the mountainous land was empty of supplies to support the forces, and Massena, realising the folly of his manoeuvres, finally ordered a concentration between Sabugal, Rapoula-do-Coa and Alfayates.[123]

On 31 March Wellington wrote,

> I don't know what to make of the French army. They had yesterday, some say, the whole force, but certainly not less than 2 corps, under Massena himself, upon Guarda, which is one of the strongest positions in the country. We manoeuvred them out of it, in 5 columns, without firing a shot ; and they went off towards the Coa in considerable confusion, except the rear guard, which retired in excellent order. They were much stronger than we.[124]

As well as following Massena, Wellington was handling other matters, writing to the Earl of Liverpool on the 31st requesting 150,000 pairs of large, well-made shoes for the army. He complained on behalf of the soldiers, '… as the soldiers pay for the shoes they receive, it is but just towards them that they should be of the best quality for their purpose, and should fit them'.[125] The army had marched far, and shoes were vitally important to the wellbeing of the soldiers. The rough Portuguese roads meant that their shoes wore out quickly, and at times they had to march barefoot. Lack of shoes, as with food and water, could stop an army from moving, and the army was again stationary due to lack of the means to transport food and supplies, further delaying the pursuit of the French.[126] As much as Wellington was managing the minutiae of his army's progress, Napoleon was completely out of touch with the situation in Portugal. On 31 March he dictated a letter to Marshal Berthier to be sent to Marshal Soult, planning the destruction of the British forces in Portugal. Massena was to, '… remain at Coimbra, and threaten Lisbon, which will be attacked after the harvest by 70,000 men belonging to the army of Portugal …'.[127] Napoleon still only counted 30,000 British troops as being the size of the enemy army to be defeated. By the time the letter was written, Massena's army was straggling back to the Portuguese-Spanish border, unable to threaten Portugal any more.

On 1 April Wellington wrote to Beresford that the enemy had destroyed the bridge over the Coa at Almeida, and were concentrating around Alfayates. Because of a shortage of supplies, there was no movement in the Allied army other than the Light Division marching

122 Sprünglin, 'Souvenirs', pp.474–75.

123 Fririon, *Journal Historique*, pp.173–75.

124 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.712–13, Wellington to Stuart, Celorico, 30 March, 1811.

125 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.16, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Celorico, 31 March, 1811.

126 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, p.59, Head-Quarters, Celorico, 31 March, 6:00 p.m.

127 Plon and Dumaine (eds.), *Correspondence de Napoléon I*, Vol.21, pp.525–29, 17531, au Prince de Neuchatel et de Wagram, Major Général de l'Armée d'Espagne, a Paris. Paris, nuit du 29 Au 30 Mars 1811.

to Adaõ on the road from Guarda to Sabugal to keep in contact with the French piquets.[128] On the 2nd, Wellington issued orders for an attack on the French position at Sabugal, employing Erskine's Light Division in a flanking manoeuvre on the Allied right, with the 3rd and 5th Divisions attacking frontally across the river.[129] The Light Division was to cross the Coa above Sabugal by the fords approximately two miles from the village. Erskine was cautioned to keep his right flank covered by the cavalry, and, if necessary, to move his entire division further to his right and use the ford at Quadrasayes. This would allow Erskine to bring the Light Division in behind the French positions and cut off their line of retreat.

Disappointingly, Erskine's execution was faulty, and the weather provided additional problems, with fog early on in the day and rain falling at times, obscuring any view of the enemy. Beckwith, leading the Light Division, crossed the Coa too close to Sabugal, and instead of turning the French flank, came directly at their left. A soldier in the 1/43rd recalled, 'Colonel Beckwith, who commanded the first brigade, halted at a ford to await orders, and at that moment a staff officer rode up, and somewhat hastily asked why he did not attack'.[130] Beckwith sent the brigade over the river via a ford where the water came up to the men's armpits, slowing down their advance.[131] There was fighting back-and-forth between the Light Division, as the different regiments came over the river, and the French infantry of Merle's division. However, as the rain cleared, Reynier saw the threat developing as the 3rd and 5th Divisions crossed the river at Sabugal, and ordered his forces to retreat.[132] Wellington wrote with some restraint that, 'Although the operations of this day were, by unavoidable accidents, not performed in the manner in which I intended they should be, I consider the action that was fought by the Light division, by Col. Beckwith's brigade principally, with the whole of the 2d corps, to be one of the most glorious that British troops were ever engaged in'.[133]

On the night of 3-4 April Massena issued orders for the army to retreat, and the French finally began their withdrawal back into Spain. Wellington pursued the French, placing the Light Division in a position to cut off Almeida. Although the fortress was still occupied by the French, Wellington was confident it would not take long to recover possession. He wrote on the 9th that reports had been received of the low morale of the French, and their plans to blow up Almeida. Despite this, he urged the Earl of Liverpool to send more horses because, 'I am very desirous not to be found in an incomplete state, if we are to be attacked'.[134] The allied army took up position along the Portuguese frontier, and awaited the French. Finally, on the 10th April Wellington felt confident enough to issue a proclamation announcing the liberation of Portugal: 'The Portuguese nation are informed that the cruel enemy who had invaded Portugal, and had devastated their country, have been obliged to evacuate it, after

128 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.718, Wellington to Marshal Beresford, Celorico, 1 April, 1811; *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.719–21, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Marmeleiro, 2 April, 1811.

129 Murray, *Memoir Annexed to an Atlas*, pp.60–61, 'Arrangement for the attack of the French corps at Sabugal, on the 3rd of April, 1811'.

130 Garrety, *Memoirs*, p.125.

131 Simmons, *A British Rifle Man*, p.161.

132 Paul Charles Thiebault, *Memoires*, Vol.4 (Paris: E Plon, Nourrit, 1895), p.318.

133 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.733–35, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Villar Formoso, 9 April, 1811.

134 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.735–36, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Villar Formoso, 9 April, 1811.

suffering great losses, and have retired across the Agueda. The inhabitants of the country are therefore at liberty to return to their occupations'.[135]

135 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.711, Proclamation, 10 April 1811.

Conclusion

When Foy returned to the army from meeting Napoleon, he met Massena at Ciudad Rodrigo and handed him a letter from Marshal Berthier. In it, Massena was criticised for almost every aspect of the campaign he had undertaken, from the loss of Coimbra to the final evacuation of Portugal,

> … without the honour of a battle. The Emperor, prince, has charged me to say that he expects more from your energy and from the opinion which the glorious events to which you have so often taken part have given him of you. The Emperor has repeated to you what his intentions were. At the distance he is, he can not add anything to them; but his Majesty is saddened, and we are all sorry to see the army withdraw before the English, who are so inferior in number.[1]

This contrasts sharply with the praise Wellington received. Sir David Dundas, Commander-in-Chief of the army and member of the Privy Council, wrote to Wellington,

> … it affords me much satisfaction to convey to your Lordship the favourable sentiments of approbation with which His Royal Highness is impressed by the conduct of the troops under your guidance, and by the able, prompt, and judicious manner in which you have directed their energies against a formidable enemy, whose retreat appears to be facilitated by the favourable nature of the country. I beg to request your Lordship's acceptance of my congratulations upon the success which has attended your unremitting exertions for the public service, which cannot fail of being duly appreciated by a grateful country.[2]

Why had the French been defeated in a campaign which Napoleon clearly considered to be a straightforward occupation of the country? Did the French lose the campaign, rather than the allies win? Returning to the descriptions provided in the Introduction to this work, Wellington had the ways and means to execute his strategy in Portugal, to fulfil the required ends. Massena did not.

1 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.604, Pièces Justificatives No XVI, 17 April 1811.

2 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.7, p.100, Sir David Dundas to Wellington, Horse Guards, 9 April 1811.

Strategy is always subject to chance and friction. Clausewitz wrote that a general can best demonstrate his strategic capability, '… by managing a campaign exactly to suit his objectives and his resources, doing neither too much nor too little.'[3] Implicit in this is the idea that in managing the campaign the enemy's actions must be accounted for by flexibility of planning and assumptions, limiting the effect of chance and friction on one's own plans. The strategies adopted by the commanders differed in this one, most significant, way. Massena's strategy was developed without serious regard for the capabilities and activity of the enemy. It did not take the enemy's possible actions into account in the plans, and the assumptions regarding the campaign were fundamentally flawed. Napoleon must take a large proportion of the blame for the shortcomings of Massena's strategy, dictated as it was to a great extent by his instructions from Paris. Wellington, on the other hand, analysed the possible enemy options and accounted for each of them in turn, developing each part of his plan accordingly.

This campaign also vividly demonstrates the maxim that a successful general is the one that makes the fewest mistakes. Wellington's plans were not perfect, and he made mistakes, but fewer than Massena and Napoleon. Wellington was also the master of his own strategy, with the complete support (eventually) of his own government, and could adapt and change it as he went, minimising the effects of any mistakes made. Massena's strategy was dictated to him by a remote Emperor, determinedly unaccepting of the problems posed by the country and the enemy in Portugal. He was unable to change it in its basic form, and was severely limited in his freedom of operation.

As Professor Colin S. Gray points out, '… strategy has an economic-logistical dimension … strategy attempted heedless of their discipline is wont to founder at the operational and tactical levels of war.'[4] Wellington's army was quartered in a friendly country, and he had effective control of the economy. There was sufficient food supplied through the commissariat and the port at Lisbon, to keep the allied troops healthy and their horses well fed, at least for most of the time. If there were problems with food supplies, it was with inadequate transportation and availability at the front, rather than overall quantity. Although Wellington's logistical problems were slight when compared to those of the French army, they caused serious problems for the freedom of movement of the allied army, and demonstrated the difficulties of moving large bodies of troops in Portugal.

Wellington had intelligence of the state of the communications in the country, including the suitability of many of the roads and bridges for troop movements, although a full survey would not be complete until after the campaign was over. Maps and itineraries had been prepared which allowed him a much clearer view of the routes available for movement of his army, the detail of which the French lacked. He had mobilised the population using the local laws to provide an irregular force which could harass and injure the French forces in Portugal. Moreover, Wellington had time. The longer Massena took to advance into Portugal, the stronger the defences became, and the numbers and resources of the allied army increased.

3 Clausewitz, *On War*, p.208.

4 Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.32.

The imbalance in the availability of intelligence and secure communications is hard to overstate. As one of the means with which armies manoeuvre and fight, it is essential to have good intelligence. Wellington could rely on secure lines of communication back to Lisbon, and between his formations, as well as a steady stream of information about the enemy. Massena could not be sure of any message reaching its goal, even between the army corps. Once the *Armée de Portugal* ventured past the Spanish frontier, communications with the rest of the French army were effectively lost. Instead of the French army moving with speed, as they had relied on in the past for their victories, strong reconnaissance forces were needed to observe the enemy and to protect themselves, and a slow logistical train delayed the overall pace of advance. However, the French did obtain useful information from the surprisingly large number of deserters who came over to them, British, Portuguese, and German.

Many of the French sources seek to minimise Wellington's personal influence on the outcome of the campaign. Guingret wrote, 'All the news-papers resounded with the pretended brilliant victory won by Wellington: it is from there that the too gigantic reputation which he now enjoys with those who judge only by the results to date, without considering what are the effects of chance, of wisdom, and of science, or whether they arise from the gross faults of the enemy.'[5]

Pelet lists several criticisms of Wellington's conduct of the campaign immediately following the Battle of Buçaco,[6] and he dismissed Wellington as timid and slow, but his criticism does not see the 'cautious' system for what it was. Wellington commanded the only large field army Britain had, and using his 'cautious' system he actively avoided situations which might threaten its existence. Some writers have also criticised Wellington's scorched earth strategy: how could he destroy the country he was tasked with saving? Wellington was clear in his own mind that the strategy he had adopted was the only one capable of addressing the problem of the French invasion, the need to keep his army intact, and the need to remain in Portugal for as long as possible, preferably long enough to remove the French from the country. For the French army, used to manoeuvring quickly and foraging extensively, 'scorched earth' made a vice from a virtue. Wellington was prepared to take complete responsibility for the success, or failure, of the strategy.

By contrast, writers seek to excuse Massena; that he was well past his prime, tired and in ill-health. Yet he had undertaken a successful command only the year before as part of Napoleon's campaign against the Austrians which ended at the Battle of Wagram, and had acquired the title Prince d'Essling as a reward. Massena may not have been the commander of old, but there were at times flashes of his brilliance and determination. Rather, the decisions he took through the campaign demonstrate the difficulty of attempting to fulfil the Emperor's wishes with inadequate resources and insubordinate commanders; a dislocation between ends and means.

Once Massena had begun the invasion of Portugal, he had two attempts to unlock Lisbon. The first, at Buçaco, failed from a lack of local reconnaissance and an underestimation of the number and quality of troops in the allied defensive position. The second, at the Lines

5 Guingret, *Relation Historique*, p.64.

6 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, pp.193–95.

of Torres Vedras, failed for the lack of knowledge of the enemy's activities, and a paucity of clear understanding of the topography of the ground over which the army would be advancing. These demonstrate both a lack of leadership and a failure of the French high command, up to Napoleon, to comprehend the problems to be faced in the campaign.

Massena had several options for the route to take to occupy Lisbon, but why did he choose the one he did? This is often blamed on poor topographical intelligence: however, the idea that the invasion failed because of the limitations of the Lopéz map must be laid to rest. Additionally, the belief that the Lopéz map in the University of Belfast is the one which Massena used to plan the invasion must be seriously questioned, if not dismissed entirely. Pelet wrote that reconnaissance information was used to make corrections on the Lopéz map, and the absence of any corrections on this particular copy makes its use during the campaign by Massena unlikely.[7] Both Pelet and Marbot make much of the limitations of this map, but there is enough evidence in the *Service Historique de la Défense* at Vincennes to indicate that the French had a more detailed knowledge of the roads and villages on their path of advance than could be gained from just this map; enough knowledge to include places not on either Lopéz or Jefferys in their marching orders. For example, the itinerary map showing the roads from Viseu to Coimbra was presumably made in Viseu, but includes small villages, such as Dianterio, which do not appear on any of the other maps. It also includes the elusive road from Mortagoa through Boialvo to Sardão by which the Buçaco position was turned. This information could not have been gathered by reconnaissance, as the allied army's rearguard prevented any penetration in depth on the line of the French advance. The itinerary maps show that the French had sufficient intelligence to identify if the roads they were to go by were capable of taking guns and wagons, however inaccurate that intelligence might have been. What the French lacked, and what would have made the maps practically useless, was a complete absence of local guides. Without road or town markers, guides were essential not only to show the route to where one was going, but, more importantly, to indicate one's present location. Without that knowledge, all other information became useless.

On the allied side, Wellington's campaign did not necessarily go as he had expected, despite extensive and careful planning. Although successful at Buçaco, Wellington's reasons for fighting there, and then hastily retreating, have been subject to criticism. Wellington may have had several reasons for fighting at Buçaco, but we must take him at his word when he wrote to Sir Charles Stuart on 24 September stating, '… I shall do everything in my power to stop the enemy here …'.[8] Stopping the French army at Buçaco would save the larger part of the country from occupation and the stringencies which were to be applied. Furthermore, a successful battle would have two beneficial outcomes: the Portuguese troops who had not seen fighting might have the opportunity to experience it in a secure position; and the 'croakers' could be at least partially quietened about the need to fight a battle against the French. A failure would mean an ignominious retreat and embarkation, a contingency for which Wellington was prepared, but did not expect to have to carry out.

7 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.55.

8 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, pp.299–300, Wellington to Stuart, Bussaco, 24 September 1810.

Wellington subsequently wrote that the battle had achieved several purposes, amongst them were, '… a favourable opportunity of showing the enemy the description of troops of which this army is composed [and] it has brought the Portuguese levies into action with the enemy for the first time in an advantageous situation …'[9] However, this ignores at least one brigade of Portuguese infantry under Brigadier General Pack which had fought as part of the rearguard from Almeida, and had shown itself to be a reliable formation. According to Wellington, the Portuguese troops needed exposing to a 'real' battle. They were relatively inexperienced troops who needed a very strong defensive position from which to fight and gain confidence. Many reported how well the Portuguese fought, despite a unit of militia running away. Captain Percival of the Coldstream Guards wrote, '… an action took place on the 27th a few leagues from Coimbra … The Portuguese behaved most gallantly …'[10] Wellington also wished to give the French a bloody fight, possibly in the hope that if he could delay them and inflict serious casualties, he need not withdraw any more. After the battle, he spoke of the Portuguese Army under Marshal Beresford, '… the merit of having raised, formed, disciplined, and equipped the Portuguese Army, which has now shown itself capable of engaging and defeating the enemy.'[11] Blooding the Portuguese soldiers was worth the risk of a battle.

The battle might also silence the 'croakers' who expected the British army to quickly retreat to their ships at the advance of the French. To demonstrate his willingness to fight to the British and Portuguese governments and people, perhaps the risk was worth taking. It is worth quoting Wellington at length regarding the reasons he put forward for fighting the battle:

> The croakers about useless battles will attack me again on that of Busaco, [sic] notwithstanding that our loss was really trifling but I should have been inexcusable if, knowing what I did, I had not endeavoured [sic] to stop the enemy there; and I should have stopped him entirely if it had not been for the blunders of the Portuguese General commanding in the north, who was prevented by a small French patrol from sending Trant by the road by which he was ordered to march. If he had come by that road, the French could not have turned our position, and they must have attacked us again: they could not have carried it, and they must have retired. The question is whether, having it in my power to take such a position, it was right to incur the risk of a general engagement in it? That which has since happened shows that, if not turned, I could have maintained it without loss of importance, and that, if turned, I could retire from it without inconvenience; and under these circumstances there could be no doubt. To this add that the battle has had the best effects in inspiring confidence in the Portuguese troops both among our croaking officers and the people of the country. It has likewise removed an impression that had begun to be very general, that we intended to fight no more but retire to our ships; and it has given the Portuguese troops a taste for an amusement

9 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.307, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Coimbra, 30 September 1810.

10 The National Army Museum, NAM 1982-02-8-1, George Percival, 'Letter from Captain George Percival to His Aunt, Mrs Charles Drummond, 29 September 1810', 29 September 1810.

11 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.308, Wellington to the Earl of Liverpool, Coimbra, 30 September 1810.

> to which they were not before accustomed, and which they would not have acquired if I had not put them in a very strong position.[12]

Wellington had little to lose and much to gain from accepting battle at Buçaco. Confident in his British and German troops, but to a lesser extent in the Portuguese, he was as certain as he could be that if attacked he could hold the ridge. He was as confident about being able to move away from the position towards Coimbra, and thence towards Lisbon, if it became necessary. It appears that nothing the enemy had done since entering Portugal concerned him about either of these points.

All the indications point to Massena assuming that the Allied position ended at the pass above San Antonio do Cantaro. Why otherwise would the orders have read, 'II Corps will attack the right of the enemy's army …'?[13] The orders issued by Massena certainly seem to indicate the belief that Wellington's forces only extended to the pass. Massena perhaps thought that Hill was still south of the Mondego, as he had been prior to the 26th. Reynier's attack seems foolhardy given that Leith's and Hill's divisions to the south that were within marching distance of the objective, and, according to Pelet, Reynier believed he would receive a drubbing.[14] There is a likelihood too that the French high command believed either that Wellington did not have all his forces on the ridge, or that some were withdrawing at the time of the attack. Massena was prepared to countenance the possibility of a defeat, reasonably secure in the knowledge that his army could retreat to its base of operations at Almeida.[15] Alternatively, victory might enable him to catch the retreating allies around Coimbra or on more level ground, where his superiority in cavalry would begin to tell. Even without the destruction of the allied army, the embarkation of the British would lead to the occupation of Portugal, enabling resistance in the Iberian Peninsula to be supressed. The risk had been worth taking. However, the failure of the two attacks had cost the French army dear, with nearly 5,000 men recorded as killed, wounded or missing.[16]

The amount of notice that Wellington gave of the retreat from Buçaco poses one or two problems. Neither the army nor the civilians were prepared for the haste with which Wellington withdrew his forces after the battle, and for a short period his arrangements effectively collapsed. As reported by several eyewitnesses, the citizens of Coimbra were surprised by the retreat following the Battle of Buçaco. Also, the ability to remove all the foodstuffs and other supplies from the grasp of the advancing French was undermined by the speed of the retreat. The haste with which Wellington began the withdrawal meant that stores could not be removed quickly enough, and supplies were left for the advancing French. The French were able to collect sufficient resources to pursue the retreating allies, and maintain their position for several weeks in front of the Lines at Lisbon. The only reason

12 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Supplementary Dispatches*, Vol.6, pp.606–7, Wellington to Wellesley Pole, Leiria, 4 October 1810.

13 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.388.

14 Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal*, p.176.

15 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, pp.192–93.

16 Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna*, Vol.7, p.573, État des pertes dans la journée du 27 septembre 1810. (Tués, blessés, faits prisonniers.); Horward, *The Battle of Bussaco*, p.173.

the allied army was not pressed during this part of the retreat was the French were having significant problems of their own.

Tactically, for the allied army, the retreat from Buçaco was a success: the army reached the Lines at Lisbon without substantial loss of men, and with time to take up their positions within the defences. However, the initial stages of the withdrawal through Coimbra and for some days after were disorganised and wasteful. Straggling from the army reached substantial numbers, prompting harsh countermeasures. The desolation of the countryside had succeeded in the retreat from Almeida to Coimbra, where the French met destroyed mills and empty villages as they advanced and the allied army fell back according to the overall plan. Immediately after the Battle of Buçaco, and for several weeks subsequently, the policy of 'scorched earth' failed. Although attempts were made to destroy the remaining supplies, enough survived to assist the French army in their advance towards Lisbon, and allow them to sustain their army in front of the lines and at Santarém. Wellington criticised the Portuguese government for their inactivity, but he was fully aware of the time necessary to destroy the supplies and equipment. This lack of preparation leads to the conclusion that Wellington believed he could stop the French, and having failed in that objective was found far less well prepared for the withdrawal from Buçaco.

Once the armies had reached the Lines of Torres Vedras, a stalemate developed along the Lisbon peninsula, but one which saw the French army continually weakened and the allied army constantly strengthened. Massena was wagering his army on the prospect of Drouet and the IX Corps reinforcing him, and possibly on Soult making an advance into Alentejo and threatening Lisbon from the south and east. The French army stayed in front of the Lines for a month before Massena was forced to accept the situation would not improve and to order a change of position. His lack of provisions, and the absence of working supply and communication lines back to Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, meant his army slowly starved during the winter. Massena was forced to retreat from Santarém for two reasons which are inextricably linked: failure of logistics and communications. His army could not feed itself in the position it had taken up, and lacked supplies from outside; and despite the best efforts of *Général de Division* Éblé the bridge across the Tagus never materialised, which thwarted Massena's option of moving into Alentejo to collect more food and to establish communications with Soult.

Distributing supplies and food to the army was not only a French problem. The commissariat of Wellington's army was hard pressed to keep up with the rapid advance in pursuit of the French in 1811. At some points in the chase, many allied units went for several days without receiving any food or supplies, and the pursuit lost contact with the French as they withdrew from the Alva towards Celorico. The Portuguese commissariat failed completely, despite pressure on the Portuguese government by Wellington and Beresford to rectify the situation, resulting in the Portuguese troops being supplied on several occasions from the British commissariat.[17] The flexibility provided by the Royal Navy allowed the logistical tail to be moved from Lisbon to Figueira once the advance had reached Coimbra and the Mondego was secure, but still took time for the supply situation to stabilise.

The defences built around Lisbon have courted mild controversy since they were built, but have never truly attracted the attention they deserve. This is partly due to the fact that no

17 Gurwood (ed.), *Dispatches*, Vol.4, p.653, Memorandum, Cartaxo, 5 March 1811.

great battle was fought over them, but also because they were in use for only a month before the French withdrew from them. Their impact on the operations of both armies was enormous, but their impact on the history of the Peninsular War has been limited. The source of the original idea for the defences is obscure, and the contribution of the Portuguese to their construction, both engineering and labour, has been understated. English language histories, naturally, focus on the British aspect of their funding and construction, but there is still more to be learned from the Portuguese archives about the Lines.

Vast sums of money were poured into Portugal to build the lines of Torres Vedras, subsidise the Portuguese economy, pay compensation to Portuguese mill owners, and support the military operations of the Portuguese army. After the end of the Napoleonic Wars there was a move by the British Government to try and recover some of the money spent on the defensive works around Lisbon, to which Wellington was strongly opposed. He wrote,

> … It appears to me that they could still have a fair claim to set off the purchase or hire of the ground on which the works stood against the expenses of their construction. Upon the whole it has always appeared to me that the demand of payment of any part of the expenses of the construction of these works ought not to be made upon the Portuguese government.[18]

It is important to remember the context of the campaign of 1810 to understand its true significance. At the time, the only organised armed resistance to Napoleon occurred in the Iberian Peninsula. Of those engaged, the Spanish armies lacked the ability to sustain their forces in the field for long. The only resistance on the European continent was the allied army under Wellington. Diplomatically, the campaign was a success for the British government, and provided additional leverage for the pursuit of the war against Napoleon with the opposition in Parliament. As far as the Portuguese government and Regency Council were concerned, it vindicated Wellington's strategy, which reduced the criticisms against him from this particular quarter.

The consequences of the campaign were long-lasting, not least that Lisbon was not again threatened by a French army during the Napoleonic Wars. While Massena was to fight another battle at Fuentes d'Onoro, and Marshal Marmont was to undertake an attempted invasion in 1811, the threat to the country was reduced significantly, and border infringements by the French restricted in scope and time. The cost to Portugal had been high, with its economy in ruins and countryside ravaged. Portugal did not properly recover for many years, despite aid from Britain. However, the Portuguese army had been reconstituted and could take the field as equals with the British. The Spanish armies were also given time to reorganise, eventually taking the field successfully as part of the allied army. The success of this campaign led ultimately to the appointment of Wellington as Commander-in-Chief of all the armies in the Peninsula, including the Spanish, unifying command and creating a truly allied army which would go on to victory in 1814.

18 2nd Duke of Wellington (ed.), *Dispatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington* (London: John Murray, 1867), Vol.1 pp.213–14, Memorandum on the Proposed Demand on Portugal for Payment of the Expenses of the Lines and of Prisoners of War, 8 January 1822.

Appendix I

Dramatis Personae

The French

Belmas, *Chef de Bataillon* Jacques Vital, was an officer in the engineers.

Berthier, Marshal Louis Alexandre, Prince de Neufchâtel et Wagram, was Napoleon's Chief-of-Staff.

Bonaparte, Napoleon, Emperor of the French.

Clarke, *Général de Division* Henri, Duc de Feltre, was Minister of War from 1807.

Couche, *Chef de Bataillon*, was Commander of Engineers of the VI Corps under Marshal Ney

Fririon, *Général de Brigade* François Nicolas Mathus, was Massena's Chief of Staff. He had volunteered in 1782 as a private in the Royal Army.

de la Grave, *Capitaine* André, was a deputy on the army staff and aide-de-camp to Junot.

Guingret, *Capitaine* Pierre François, was an officer of the 6e Légere in Marchand's division of Ney's VI Corps.[1] He had served with the regiment since the Battle of Jena in 1806.

Junot, *Général de Division* Jean Andoche, Duc d'Abrantès, was known as a rash and temperamental general. He had led the invasion of Portugal in 1807 when he occupied Lisbon.

Lazowski, *Général de Division* Joseph, was attached to the *Armée de Portugal* in 1810 as the Commander of Engineers.

Lemonnier-Delafosse, *Capitaine* Marie Jean Baptiste, was an officer in the 31e Légere which was part of Heudelet's division.

Massena, Marshal André, Prince d'Essling, was one of Napoleon's most capable Marshals, having risen from the ranks of the pre-Revolutionary army.

Ney, Marshal Michel, Duc d'Elchingen, was the commander of VI Corps, and had commanded this formation since 1805. He had risen from the ranks of a cavalry regiment and was renowned for his bravery in battle.

Pelet, *Chef de Bataillon* Jean-Jacques, was Massena's chief aide-de-camp. He had joined the army as an infantryman, but transferred to become a topographical engineer. He had been Massena's aide-de-camp since 1805.

1 Bonnal, *La Vie Militaire Du Marechal Ney*, Vol.3, p.385.

Reynier, *Général de Division* Count Jean Louis, had joined the artillery in 1792, and had fought alongside Massena in Italy in 1805.
Sebastiani, *Général de Division* Horace, was a politician and soldier, although regarded as somewhat unexceptional as a military commander.
Soult, Marshal Nicolas Jean de Dieu, Duc de Dalmatie, had served in the Peninsula since 1808, and had been forced out of Oporto by Wellington in 1809.
Sprünglin, *Capitaine* Emmanuel-Frédéric, was an officer on the staff of VI Corps.
Valazé, *Colonel* Eléonor, was Commander of Engineers of the VIII Corps under Junot.

The British

Beresford, Marshal William, Marshal of the Portuguese Army, was a British lieutenant general appointed to the post in 1809. He reformed the Portuguese Army, enabling it to take the field in 1810 as equals with its British counterpart.
Burgoyne, Captain John, was an engineer officer active in destroying defences, bridges and roads in Portugal during the French invasion.
Cotton, Lieutenant General Sir Stapleton, was overall commander of Wellington's cavalry, and known for his magnificent uniforms. Although criticised during the campaign for errors of command, he was well liked by his men, and respected by Wellington.
Cox, Brigadier General William, was brother-in-law to Marshal Beresford and had been selected by Wellington to command the fortress at Almeida. He was an experienced officer and was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Portuguese service before being promoted.
Craufurd, Brigadier General Robert, known as 'Black Bob' to his men, was temperamental as well as being a strict disciplinarian, and known for his courage under fire. He commanded the Light Division, but was prone to rash – or daring depending on one's viewpoint – action, and was trusted by Wellington to perform the demanding outpost duties for the army.
d'Urban, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin, served as Quartermaster-General in the Portuguese Army under Marshal Beresford.
Fletcher, Lieutenant Colonel Richard, was Wellington's chief engineer in Portugal. He was responsible for the implementation of Wellington's instructions to build the defensive lines at Lisbon.
Hill, Lieutenant General Rowland, was one of Wellington's most reliable and trusted commanders. He led a separate corps of the army during the campaign, often in command detached from Wellington. Brave in battle, he was known to his troops as 'Daddy Hill' because of the care he took of their wellbeing, and unlike some other commanders in Wellington's army was rarely heard to swear.
Jones, Captain John, was an engineer serving under Fetcher, and was appointed to complete the works at Torres Vedras when Fletcher re-joined the army headquarters in the summer of 1810.
Leith, Major General James, had served as a brigade commander under Sir John Moore in the 1808 campaign. He commanded the 5th Division during the 1810 campaign

Picton, Major General Sir Thomas, was the hot-tempered, often foul-mouthed commander of the 3rd Division. He was renowned for his courage, but disliked by many of his fellow officers and men for his irritability and strict application of discipline.

Scovell, Captain George, was an officer of the Quartermaster-General's department.

Wellesley, Lieutenant General Arthur, Viscount Wellington, had been a successful general in India, and had been placed in command of the British Army in Portugal following the evacuation from La Coruña in January 1809.

The Portuguese

Forjaz, Miguel Pereira, Count of Feira, was the Secretary of the Regency responsible for the affairs of War and the Navy, and Foreign Affairs. He worked well with Wellington and Beresford, and was respected by them both.

Neves Costa, *Major* Jose Maria, was an engineer in the Real Corpo de Engenheiros responsible for much of the topographical surveying of central Portugal before 1810.

Sousa Coutinho, José António de, also known as the 'Principal Sousa', was a member of the Regency Council of the Kingdom of Portugal. He was the brother of conde de Linhares, Minister of State to the Prince Regent in Brazil, and also of conde do Funchal, the Portuguese Ambassador to the British Government.

The Spanish

C**aro y Sureda, *Teniente General* Pedro**, Marquis de la Romana, was a nobleman who had served in the Spanish army as a cavalry officer. He was commander of the Spanish division sent to assist Napoleon in Denmark. Returning to the Peninsula with his division, he worked closely with Wellington, who had a great respect for the Spanish General.

Mendizábal Iraeta, *Teniente General* Gabriel, was an officer who had risen from the ranks of the Spanish army. A rising star in 1810, his capabilities were limited, and he did not have the same level of trust from Wellington as Romana.

Pérez de Herrasti, *Teniente General* Andrés, was a nobleman who had served in the army since his early teenage years. He was appointed to command the fortress at Ciudad Rodrigo in 1809.

Appendix II

Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel Fletcher, Commanding Royal Engineers

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Lisbon, 20th October, 1809

In the existing relative state of the Allied and French armies in the Peninsula, it does not appear probable that the enemy have it in their power to make an attack upon Portugal. They must wait for their reinforcements; and as the arrival of these may be expected, it remains to be considered what plan of defence shall be adopted for this country.

The great object in Portugal is the possession of Lisbon and the Tagus, and all our measures must be directed to this object. There is another also connected with that first object, to which we must likewise attend, viz. the embarkation of the British troops in case of reverse.

In whatever season the enemy may enter Portugal, he will probably make his attack by two distinct lines, the one north, the other south of the Tagus; and the system of defence to be adopted must be founded upon this general basis.

In the winter season the river Tagus will be full, and will be a barrier to the enemy's enterprises with his left attack, not very difficult to be secured. In the summer season, however, the Tagus being fordable in many places between Abrantes and Salvaterra, and even lower than Salvaterra, care must be taken that the enemy does not, by his attack directed from the south of the Tagus, and by the passage of that river, cut off from Lisbon the British army engaged in operations to the northward of the Tagus.

The object of the allies should be to oblige the enemy as much as possible to make his attack with concentrated corps. They should stand in every position which the country could afford, such a length of time as would enable the people of the country to evacuate the towns and villages, carrying with them or destroying all articles of provisions and carriages, not necessary for the allied army; each corps taking care to preserve its communication with the others, and its relative distance from the point of junction.

In whatever season the enemy's attack may be made, the whole allied army, after providing for the garrisons of Elvas, Almeida, Abrantes, and Valença, should be divided into three corps, to be posted as follows one corps to be in Beira; another in Alentejo; and the third, consisting of the Lusitanian legion, eight battalions of caçadores, and two of militia, in the mountains of Castello Branco.

In the winter, the corps in Beira should consist of two thirds of the whole numbers of the operating army. In the summer, the corps in Beira, and Alentejo should be nearly of equal numbers.

I shall point out in another memorandum the plan of operations to be adopted by the corps north and south of the Tagus in the winter months.

In the summer, it is probable, as I have above stated, that the enemy will make his attack in two principal corps, and that he will also push one through the mountains of Castello Branco and Abrantes. His object will be, by means of his corps south of the Tagus, to turn the positions which might be taken up in his front on the north of that river; to cut off from Lisbon the corps opposed to him; and to destroy it by an attack in front and rear at the same time. This can be avoided only by the retreat of the right centre, and left of the allies, and their junction at a point at which, from the state of the river, they cannot be turned by the passage of the Tagus by the enemy's left.

The first point of defence which presents itself below that at which the Tagus ceases to be fordable is the river of Castanheira, and here the army should be posted as follows: 10,000 men, including all the cavalry, in the plain between the Tagus and the Hills; 5000 infantry on the left of the plain; and the remainder of the army, with the exception of the following detachments, on the height in front, and on the right of Cadafoes. In order to prevent the enemy from turning, by their left, the positions which the allies may take up for the defence of the high road to Lisbon by the Tagus, Torres Vedras should be occupied by a corps of 5000 men; the height in the rear of Sobral de Monte Agraço by 4000 men; and Arruda by 2000 men.

There should be a small corps on the height east by south of the height of Sobral, to prevent the enemy from marching from Sobral to Arruda; and there should be another small corps on the height of Ajuda, between Sobral and Bucellas.

In case the enemy should succeed in forcing the corps at Torres Vedras, or Sobral de Monte Agraço, or Arruda; if the first, it must fall back gradually to Cabeça de Montachique, occupying every defensible point on the road: if the second, it must fall back upon Bucellas, destroying the road after the height of Ajuda: if the third, it must fall back upon Alhandra, disputing the road particularly at a point one league in front of that town.

In case any one of these three positions should be forced, the army must fall back from its position as before pointed out, and must occupy one as follows: < 5000 men, principally light infantry, on the hill behind Alhandra; the main body of the army on the Serra or Serves, with its right on that part of the Serra which is near the Cazal de Portella, and is immediately above the road which crosses the Serra from Bucellas to Alverca; and its left extending to the pass of Bucellas. The entrance of the pass of Bucellas to be occupied by the troops retired from Sobral de Monte Agraco, &c., and Cabeça de Montachique, by the corps retired from Torres Vedras.

In order to strengthen these several positions, it is necessary that different works should be constructed immediately, and that arrangements and preparations should be made for the construction of others.

Accordingly, I beg Colonel Fletcher, as soon as possible, to review these several positions.

1st. He will examine particularly the effect of damming up the mouth of the Castanheira river; how far it will render that river a barrier, and to what extent it will fill.

2nd. He will calculate the labor [sic] required for that work, and the time it will take, as well as the means of destroying the bridge over the river, and of constructing such redoubts as might be necessary on the plain, and on the hill on the left of the road, effectually to defend the plain. He will state particularly what means should be prepared for these works. He will also consider of the means and time required, and the effect which might be produced by sloping the banks of the river.

3rd. He will make the same calculations for the works to be executed on the hill in front, and on the right of Cadafoes, particularly on the left of that hill, to shut the entry of the valley of Cadafoes.

4th. He will examine and report upon the means of making a good road of communication from the plain across the hills into the valley of Cadafoes, and to the left of the proposed position, and calculate the time and labor [sic] it will take.

5th. He will examine the road from Otta by Abregada, Labrugeira to Merciana, and thence to Torres Vedras; and also from Merciana to Sobral de Monte Agraço. He will also examine and report upon the road from Alemquer to Sobral de Monte Agraço.

6th. He will entrench a post at Torres Vedras for 5000 men. He will examine the road from Torres Vedras to Cabeça de Montachique; and fix upon the spots at which to break it up as might stop or delay the enemy; and if there should be advantageous ground at such spots, he will entrench a position for 400 men to cover the retreat of the corps from Torres Vedras.

7th. He will examine the position at Cabeça de Montachique, and determine upon its line of defence, and upon the works to be constructed for its defence, by a corps of 5000 men; of which he will estimate the time and the labor. [sic]

8th. He will entrench a position for 4000 men on the two heights which command the road from Sobral de Monte Agraço to Bucellas.

9th. He will entrench a position for 400 men on the height of Ajuda, between Sobral and Bucellas, to cover the retreat of the corps from Sobral to Bucellas; and he will calculate the means and the time it will take to destroy the road at that spot.

10th. He will construct a redoubt for 200 men and three guns at the windmill on the height of Sobral de Monte Agraço, which guns will bear upon the road from Sobral to Arruda.

11. He will ascertain the points at which and the means by which the road from Sobral to Arruda can be destroyed.

12th. He will ascertain the labor [sic] and time required to entrench a position which he will fix upon for 2000 men to defend the road coming out of Arruda towards Villa Franca and Alhandra, and he will fix upon the spot at which the road from Arruda to Alhandra can be destroyed with advantage.

13th. He will construct a redoubt on the hill which commands the road from Arruda, about one league in front of Alhandra.

14th. He will examine the estuaries at Alhandra, and see whether, by damming them up at the mouths, he could increase the difficulties of a passage by that place; and he will ascertain the time and labor [sic] and means which this work will require.

15th. He will fix upon the spots, and ascertain the time and labor [sic] required to construct redoubts upon the hill of Alhandra on the right, to prevent the passage of the enemy by

the high road; and on the left, and in the rear, to prevent by their fire the occupation of the mountains towards Alverca.

16th. He will determine upon the works to be constructed on the right of the position upon the Serra de Serves, as above pointed out, to prevent the enemy from forcing that point; and he will calculate the means and the time required to execute them. He will likewise examine the pass of Bucellas, and fix upon the works to be constructed for its defence, and calculate the means, time, and labor [sic] required for the execution.

17th. He will calculate the means, time, and labor [sic] required to construct a work upon the hill upon which the windmill stands, at the southern entrance at the pass of Bucellas.

18th. He will fix upon spots on which signal posts can be erected upon these hills, to communicate from one part of the position to the other.

19th. It is very desirable that we should have an accurate plan of the ground.

20th. Examine the island in the river opposite to Alhandra, and fix upon the spot, and calculate the means and time required to construct batteries upon it to play upon the approach to Alhandra.

21st. Examine the effect of damming up the river which runs by Loures, and calculate the time and means required to break up the bridge at Loures.

WELLINGTON.

Appendix III

The Allied Army

This Order of Battle has been taken from a document in the National Archive, Kew, WO78/5962, dated 1810, entitled 'Sketch Showing Situation of the Combined British and Portuguese Army under the Duke of Wellington in the Position of Busaco, [sic] When Attacked by French Army under Marshal Massena on 27 September 1810'.

The troops numbers have been taken from Chambers *Wellington's Battlefields Illustrated; Bussaco*, pp.10–20, J. J. Pelet, *The French Campaign in Portugal, 1810 – 1811*, p. 522–528, and Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War: September 1809 to December* Vol. 3, pp.544–548. The Portuguese army lists have the officers and men counted together.

	Officers	Men
1st Infantry Division		
Lieutenant General Brent Spencer		
Colonel Stopford's Brigade		
1st Coldstream Guards	24	790
3rd Guards (Scots Guards)	26	791
5/60th, 1 company	2	51
Major General Cameron's Brigade		
24th Regiment (2nd Battalion)	30	338
42nd Regiment (2nd Battalion)	23	391
61st Regiment (1st Battalion)	36	648
5/60th, 1 Company	3	47
Colonel Packenham's Brigade		
7th Fusiliers (1st Battalion)	26	843
79th Regiment (1st Battalion)	38	885
Major General Baron Low's Brigade		
1st Line Battalion, KGL	28	510
2nd Line Battalion, KGL	31	453
5th Line Battalion, KGL	30	460

	Officers	Men
7th Line Battalion, KGL	24	429
1st Light Battalion, Detachment 2nd Light Battalion, Detachment	6	90
2 Squadrons 4th Dragoons	14	196
Royal Staff Corps		
One 9 pounder battery of British artillery		
Two 6 pounder battery of British artillery		
One 6 pounder battery of Portuguese artillery		
3rd Infantry Division		
Sir Thomas Picton		
Colonel Mackinnon's Brigade		
45th Regiment (1st Battalion)	35	560
74th Regiment (1st Battalion)	38	456
88th Regiment (1st Battalion)	40	679
Major General Lightburne's Brigade		
5th Regiment (2nd Battalion)	31	464
83rd Regiment (2nd Battalion)	43	461
5/60th (3 Companies)	16	145
Colonel Champlimond's [sic] Portuguese Brigade		
9th Line Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,234
21st Line Regiment (1 Battalion)		541
One 9 pounder battery of Portuguese artillery		
One 6 pounder battery of Portuguese artillery		
4th Infantry Division		
Major General Cole		
Major General Campbell's Brigade		
7th Regiment (2nd Battalion)	29	585
11th Regiment (1st Battalion)	42	920
53rd Regiment (2nd Battalion)	25	448
5/60th (1 company)	2	58
Colonel Kemmis' Brigade		
27th Regiment (3rd Battalion)	34	785
40th Regiment (1st Battalion)	48	1,007
97th Regiment (1st Battalion)	27	493
5/60th (1 company)		

	Officers	Men
Colonel Harvey's Portuguese Brigade		
11th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,438
23rd Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,405
Brigadier General W Campbell's Portuguese Brigade		
6th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,317
18th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,386
6th Caçadores		546
One 6 pounder battery British artillery		
5th Infantry Division		
Major General Leith		
Lieutenant Colonel Barnes' Brigade		
1st Regiment (Royals) (3rd Battalion)	35	733
9th Regiment (1st Battalion)	30	585
38th Regiment (2nd Battalion)	29	467
Brigadier General Spry's Portuguese Brigade		
3rd Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,134
15th Regiment (2 Battalions)		905
Thomar Militia		580
Baron Eben's Portuguese Brigade		
Lusitanian Legion, (2 Battalions)		1,646
8th Line (2 Battalions)		1,161
One 9 Pounder battery of Portuguese artillery		
One 6 Pounder battery of Portuguese artillery		
Light Division		
Brigadier General Craufurd		
Lieutenant Colonel Beckwith's Brigade		
43rd Regiment (1st Battalion)	40	804
95th Regiment, (4 companies)	12	384
3rd Caçadores		656
Lieutenant Colonel Barclay's Brigade		
52nd Regiment (1st Battalion)	29	946
95th Regiment (4 companies)	12	358
1st Caçadores		546

		Officers	Men
	Battery of Royal Horse Artillery		
	Brigadier General Pack's Portuguese Brigade		
	1st Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,089
	16th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,130
	4th Caçadores		550
	One 3 pounder battery of Portuguese artillery		
	Brigadier General Coleman's Portuguese Brigade		
	7th Regiment (2 Battalions)		815
	19th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,124
	Battery of Royal Horse Artillery		
Independent units			
	Colonel Le Cor's Brigade		
	12th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,277
	13th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,078
	Castello Branco Militia		
	Idanha Militia		2,000
	Covilhaa Militia		
	One 6 pounder battery of Portuguese artillery		
Cavalry			
	Colonel Head's Brigade		
	13th Light Dragoons	29	401
	Colonel Da Costa's Portuguese Brigade		
	1st Regiment		422
	7th Regiment		223
	Lieutenant Colonel Campbell's Portuguese Brigade		
	4th Regiment		451
	10th Regiment		354
	Major General Slade's Brigade		
	1st (Royal) Dragoons	20	513
	14th Light Dragoons	17	417

	Officers	Men
Major General Anson's Brigade		
16th Light Dragoons	23	440
1st Light Dragoons (Hussars) KGL	19	420
Colonel De Grey's Brigade		
3rd Dragoon Guards	18	392
Lieutenant General Hill's Corps		
2nd Infantry Division		
Major General the Honourable William Stewart		
Lieutenant Colonel Colbourne's Brigade		
3rd Regiment (1st Battalion)	32	826
48th Regiment (2nd Battalion)	27	454
66th Regiment (2nd Battalion)	30	433
31st Regiment (2nd Battalion)	27	384
5/60th (1 company)		
Colonel Wilson's Brigade		
28th Regiment (2nd Battalion)	32	522
34th Regiment (2nd Battalion)	36	617
39th Regiment (2nd Battalion)	27	394
5/60th (1 company)	2	42
Colonel Ingles's [sic – Inglis'] Brigade		
48th Regiment (1st Battalion)	32	519
57th Regiment (1st Battalion)	28	727
29th Regiment	31	430
5/60th (1 company)	1	50
Portuguese Division		
Major General Hamilton		
Brigadier General Fonseca's Brigade		
2nd Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,317
14th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,373
Colonel Campbell's Brigade		
4th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,164
10th Regiment (2 Battalions)		1,086
Lieutenant Colonel Stewart's Brigade		
5th Caçadores		456
Two batteries of Portuguese Artillery		

Appendix IV

The French Army

Situation de l'Armée de Portugal, 15 September 1810, taken from Koch, *Mémoires de Masséna,* pp.569–571, and Fririon, *Journal Historique de La Campagne de Portugal,* pp.60–69.

		Troops	Horses
II Corps, General Reynier			
Division Merle			
Brigade Sarrut			
	2e Légère (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,459	18
	36e Line (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,343	25
Brigade Graindorge			
	4e Légère (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,494	29
	15e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,283	19
Division Heudelet			
Brigade Foy			
	17e Légère (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,424	18
	70e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,292	24
	47e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,669	29
Brigade Arnauld			
	86e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,028	31
	31e Légère (1e, 2e, 3e, 4e bat.)	1,766	23
Cavalry Division Soult			
1er Brigade			
	1er Hussards (1e, 2e esc.)	348	338
	22e Chasseurs (1e, 2e, 4e esc.)	304	341
2e Brigade			
	Chasseurs Hanovriennes (1e, 2e, 3e, 4e esc.)	345	312
	8e Dragons (1e, 2e esc.)	297	278

		Troops	Horses
Artillery			
1er Division	3e Régt à pied, 3e Régt à Cheval, 2e bat. (bis) du train	269	
2e Division	3e Régt à pied, 3e Régt à Cheval, 5e & 6e bat. (bis) du train	269	
Reserve Parc	3e Régt à pied, 2e Régt à Cheval, ouv. d'artillerie. 2e, 6e, 10e bat. (bis) du train, 11e bat princ.	664	
Engineers	1e bat.de sapeurs et train du 4. bat.	23	
VI Corps, Marshal Ney			
Division Marchand			
Brigade Maucune			
	6e Légère (1e, 2e bat.)	1,443	
	69e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,759	
Brigade Marcognet			
	39e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,641	
	76e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,704	
Etat-major		14	
Division Mermet			
Brigade Bardet			
	25e Légère (1e, 2e bat.)	1,553	
	27e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,708	
Brigade Labassée			
	50e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	2,074	
	59e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e bat.)	1,674	
Etat-major		13	
Division Loison			
Brigade Simon			
	Légion du Midi (1e bat.)	563	9
	Légion Hanovrienne (1e, 2e bat.)	1,035	22
	26e Ligne (4e, 5e, 6e bat.)	1,532	24
Brigade Ferey			
	32e Légère (2e bat.)	381	10
	66e Ligne (4e, 5e, 6e bat.)	1,716	22
	82e Line (4e, 5e, 6e bat.)	1676	24

		Troops	Horses
Cavalry Brigade Lamotte			
	3e Hussards (1e, 2e, 3e esc.)	422	435
	15e Chasseurs (1e, 2e, 3e esc.)	520	545
Artillery			
1er Division	1e Régt. à Pied (10e, 14e comp.), ouvriers (4e), 5e bat. princ. du train (1e, 3e, 6e comp.), 10e bat. (1e comp.)	232	283
2e Division	1e Régt. à Pied (13e comp.), ouvriers (4e), 5e bat. princ. du train (2e, 5e, 6e comp.), 10e bat. (2e comp.)	255	264
3e Division	1e Régt. à Pied (10e comp.), 3e Régt. (8 comp.) bat (4e, 9e comp.), 10e bat. princ. du train (2e comp.), 8e bat. (bis) (4e comp.)	216	229
Cavalry Division	2e Régt à Cheval (5e comp.), 10e bat princ. (4e, 5e comp.)	143	169
Reserve Parc	1e Régt. à Pied (5e, 10e comp.), ouvrier (4e), 5e bat. princ. (Ét-Maj.) 10e bat. princ. (Ét-Maj, 1e, 2e, 3e, 4e, 5e comp.) 4e bat. princ. (1e, 2e, 3e comp.)	448	475
Engineers	4e bat. du 2e comp.	103	
Equip. Milit.	5e	191	303
Gendarmerie		23	28
Mulets de Bât		59	105
VIII Corps, General Junot			
Division Clausel			
Brigade Ménard			
	19e Ligne (4e bat.)	579	14
	25e Ligne (4e bat.)	486	12
	28e Ligne (4e bat.)	460	12
	34e Ligne (4e bat.)	590	13
Brigade Taupin			
	15e Légère (4e bat.)	707	11
	36e Ligne (4e bat.)	624	9
	46e Ligne (4e bat.)	517	7
	75e Ligne (4e bat.)	425	9
Brigade Godart			
	22e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e, 4e bat.)	2,248	47
	Etat-major	14	64

		Troops	Horses
Division Solignac			
Brigade Gratien			
	15e Ligne (4e, 5e bat.)	746	17
	47e Ligne (4e, 5e bat.)	759	10
	70e Ligne (4e, 5e bat.)	540	10
	86e Ligne (4e, 5e bat.)	816	13
	Regiment de Prusse	812	18
Brigade Thomieres			
	65e Ligne (1e, 2e, 3e, 4e bat.)	2,662	52
	Regiment Irlandaise (2e, 3e bat.)	861	14
	Etat-major	5	21
Cavalry Brigade Saint Croix			
	1er Dragons (3e, 4e esc.)	271	287
	2e Dragons (3e, 4e esc.)	248	263
	4e & 9e Dragons (3e, 4e esc.)	578	607
	14e Dragons (3e, 4e esc.)	274	287
	26e Dragons (3e, 4e esc.)	210	219
Artillery			
1st Division	8e Régt à Pied (11e comp.), 6e Régt à Cheval (8e comp.), 12e comp. d'ouvrier, 12e bat. Bis (6e comp.)	298	333
2nd Division	7e Régt à Pied (20e comp.), 2e Régt à Cheval, (6e comp.), 6e, 12e comp. d'ouvrier, 2e, 5e, 8e, bat. bis (detach), 11e bat. princ. (4e comp.)	257	324
Parc	6e Régt à Pied (9e comp.), 7e Régt à Cheval, (20e comp.), 6e, 12e comp. d'ouvriers, 1e bat. princ. (detach), 2e bat. bis (detach), 3e bat. bis (detach), 4e bat. bis (3e, 6e comp.), 9e bat. princ. (3e comp.), 9e bat. bis (detach), 11e bat. princ. (2e comp.), trains de Berg et de Wurtzbourg	390	435
Pontonniers		66	2
Engineers	2e bat. du sapeurs (2e comp.), Ét-Maj du Genie	105	19
Gendarmerie		20	21
Equipment Militaire		83	146
Mulets de Bat		57	91

		Troops	Horses
Cavalry Reserve Division			
General Montbrun			
Brigade Lorcet			
	3e Dragons (Ét-Maj, 1e, 2e, 3e, 4e esc.)	561	563
	6e Dragons (Ét-Maj, 1e, 2e, 3e, 4e esc.)	640	686
Brigade Cavrois			
	10e Dragoons (Ét-Maj, 1e, 2e, 3e, 4e esc.)	509	535
	11e Dragoons (Ét-Maj, 1e, 2e, 3e, 4e esc.)	476	497
Brigade Gardanne			
	15e Dragoons (Ét-Maj, 1e, 2e, 3e, 4e esc.)	622	627
	25e Dragoons (Ét-Maj, 1e, 2e, 3e, 4e esc.)	679	677
Artillery			
	5e Régt à Cheval (5e comp.)	76	80
	4e comp. d'ouvriers	3	
	2e bat. bis du train(2e comp.)	67	129
	4e bat. principal du train	18	28

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